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Reevaluating Diglossia: Data from Low German

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Reevaluating Diglossia: Data from Low German

by

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Dissertation

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Dedication

To my loving grandmother

Aaltien Rohde

Uns aule Platt, wu moj klingt dat,

As Klockenklang van wieden,

So hartlik klingt, as hörden wy

Musik ut aule tieden.

(Carl van der Linde)

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Reevaluating Diglossia: Data from Low German

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Supervisor: Hans Boas

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Ever since Ferguson published his seminal paper "Diglossia" in 1959 it has been the subject of much discussion. There has been wide agreement among researchers (Fishman, 1967; Britto, 1986; Hudson, 2002) about the necessity of the concept of diglossia in sociolinguistics as a term that defines two varieties of the same language spoken in the same language community. Yet, in spite or maybe because of the general acceptance of Ferguson's concept it has been more often modified, redefined, and extended than almost any other idea in sociolinguistics. In fact, as Kaye (2001: 121) points out, no other topic has generated such prodigious research in sociolinguistics over the last five decades. Much of the discussion centers around the fact that the concept of diglossia is used rather liberally in sociolinguistics and is often extended to language situations that are not truly diglossic in the Fergusonian sense. Furthermore, diglossic research of the past and present has not yet produced a definite, contemporary theoretical outline of diglossia (Hudson, 2002: 2), thus leaving the field open to both new impetus and overuse.

The purpose of this work is to reassess Ferguson's original definition of diglossia by examining the results of a sociolinguistic field study on Low German (*Platt*) that I conducted in spring 2003 in the Grafschaft Bentheim (northwest Lower Saxony). Different researchers, such as Sanders (1982), and Stellmacher (1990) have pointed out that the coexistence of Low German and High German in many communities in northern Germany constitutes a diglossic situation that corresponds closely to Ferguson's four original case studies. Although Low German research has gone to great lengths to document the many different varieties of Platt in northern Germany, there does not yet exist a comprehensive, contemporary sociolinguistic study in this field. Moreover, no study on Low German has ever extensively taken the concept of diglossia into account. This dissertation discusses how the results of my 2003 survey on Platt fit into diglossic theory but also how they diverge from it. In fact, diglossia in my target area, the Grafschaft Bentheim, is quite a unique phenomenon because several of Ferguson's original nine rubrics diagnostic of diglossia either do not apply to the Grafschaft Bentheim or they have been reversed there. The relevance of a sociolinguistic field study on Low German becomes clear if one considers that the only major study in this field (GETAS study 1984) dates back more than two decades and has been the subject of much controversy due its methods of evaluation. My 2003 study is also one of the first attempts, both in Low German and diglossic research, to address the language competence and language attitudes of three different speaker groups: (1) Platt speakers (L-speakers, 88 participants), (2) Non-Platt speakers (H-speakers, 35 participants), and

(3) children and young adults (573 participants). Most studies in diglossic research are exclusively concerned with speakers of the Low Variety (e.g. Britto, 1986) and thus often give an incomplete or slanted representation of the respective speech community. By including three different speaker groups my 2003 survey presents a more complete and representative, overall picture of the current sociolinguistic situation of Platt than other surveys. This study also goes beyond Low German research and diglossic theory by setting the massive erosion of Platt into the context of the world-wide erosion of minority languages and by discussing ways and means to revitalize the language. In fact, the alarming pace at which Platt has been eroding in the last couple of decades makes this work not only relevant but necessary to the fields of sociolinguistics, in particular diglossic studies, Low German research, and studies in endangered languages.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Maps

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this text:

Engl.	English
ENHG	Early New High German
Germ.	German
Gk.	Greek
Go.	Gothic
IE	Indo-European
Lat.	Latin
MHG	Middle High German
MLG	Middle Low German
NHG	New High German
OE	Old English
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
OS	Old Saxon
PG	Proto-Germanic
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
Skt.	Sanskrit
Swed.	Swedish

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Ever since Ferguson published his seminal paper *Diglossia* in 1959 it has been the subject of much discussion. There has been wide agreement among researchers (Fishman, 1967; Britto, 1986; Hudson, 2002) about the necessity of the concept of diglossia in sociolinguistics as a term that defines two varieties of the same language spoken in the same language community. Yet, in spite or maybe because of the general acceptance of Ferguson's concept it has been more often modified, redefined, and extended than almost any other idea in sociolinguistics. In fact, as Kaye (2001: 121) points out, no other topic has generated such prodigious research in sociolinguistics over the last five decades. Much of the discussion centers around the fact that the concept of diglossia is used rather liberally in sociolinguistics and is often extended to language situations that are not truly diglossic in the Fergusonian sense. Furthermore, diglossic research of the past and present has not yet produced a definite, contemporary theoretical outline of diglossia (Hudson, 2002: 2), thus leaving the field open to both new impetus and overuse.

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setting the massive erosion of Platt into the context of the world-wide erosion of minority languages and by discussing ways and means to revitalize the language. In fact, the alarming pace at which Platt has been eroding in the last couple of decades makes this work not only relevant but also necessary for the fields of sociolinguistics, in particular diglossic studies, Low German research, and studies in endangered languages.

1.1 Methodology

My field work took place between February and May, 2003, when I interviewed in total 88 Platt speakers, 35 Non-Platt speakers (i.e. Standard German speakers who had been living in the target area for at least fifteen years), and 573 students. As a native of the Grafschaft Bentheim, who still maintains close personal ties to both Platt speakers and Non-Platt speakers, it was relatively easy for me to gain access to the speech community. Before my departure from the States (January 2003) I had asked the local newspaper, *Grafschafter Nachrichten* (Grafschafter News), to inform its readers of my planned survey and to publish my local (i.e. Grafschafter) address and phone number in their article. The interest to participate in my study among the Grafschafter population was quite huge, and I obtained almost 75% of my adult informants via the newspaper article, i.e. they volunteered for interviews. The other 25% of the adult informants were recruited by me through personal contacts. All subjects are from different areas of the Grafschaft Bentheim, indeed, no part of the Grafschaft has been over- or underrepresented in this study. The number of male and female participants is approximately equal. Among the Platt speakers 59% are male, and 41% are female.

Among the Non-Platt speakers 40% are male, and 60% are female. The age group of the Platt speakers ranges from fourteen to ninety-one. However, the number of older Platt speakers in my study far outnumbers the younger speakers, which clearly reflects the endangered state of the language. The age groups of the Non-Platt speakers ranges from thirty to sixty-two. I usually conducted the interviews with Platt speakers in Platt, and with Non-Platt speakers in Standard German. The oral interviews (see Appendix D and E) took place at the informants' residences and were taped. I then left a questionnaire (see Appendix A and B) with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the informants, which they could fill out at their leisure and then send to my local address. Toward the end of my stay in the Grafschaft Bentheim (April 2003) I surveyed students from three different schools (*Realschule* Emlichheim, *Gynmasium* Neuenhaus, and *Kaufmännische Berufsschule* Nordhorn). I did not conduct any oral interviews with the students due to the large number of informants. Instead, I distributed, with the aid of the respective principals and several teachers, my student questionnaires (see Appendix C) during school time and collected them two days later. The age of the students ranges from twelve to nineteen, and the number of male and female students is more or less equal (47% male, 53% female). I began the counting and evaluation process of the answers while I was still in the Grafschaft and completed it in late summer 2003 in Austin, Texas.

Finally, with regards to my terminology, my target area, the Grafschaft Bentheim ("County Bentheim[1]"), is often referred to as just "Grafschaft" since this is the traditional name used by its inhabitants. I also chose to use the term "Platt" in this work rather than

[1] The word *Grafschaft* is derived from *Graf* ("count"), and it is one of only a handful of districts in Germany that still has a count.

the more common research term *Niederdeutsch* (Low German). My reason for doing so is that Low German speakers (including this author) always have and will refer to the language which is the subject of this work as simply Platt.

1.2 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured as follows: chapter two discusses the historical development of Platt. It describes the linguistic changes that took place from Indo-European to Proto-Germanic to Old Saxon, the precursor of modern-day Platt. I then discuss the rise and decline of the Hanseatic League, which made Middle Low German, the successor of Old Saxon, one of the most prestigious languages in Northern Europe between the 14th and 16th century. Finally, this chapter gives an overview of contemporary Platt with a special emphasis on *Grafschafter Platt*, the variety spoken in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

Chapter three examines the concept of diglossia and its most pertinent literature. I first discuss Ferguson's original definition of diglossia and his nine diglossic rubrics including case studies that characterize diglossic speech communities. Then I give an overview of alternative diglossic models, i.e. refinements and modifications to Ferguson's original idea (Fishman, 1967; MacKinnon, 1984; Fellmann, 1985; Pauwels, 1986; and Rindler and Schjerve, 2003). This chapter also examines the present state of diglossic research as well as attempts to create a contemporary, theoretical outline of diglossia (Hudson, 2002). Chapter three concludes with a discussion of diglossic speech

communities and their stability in two German-speaking areas of Europe (Switzerland and Germany).

Chapter four presents and discusses the results of the Platt-speakers from the 2003 survey with regards to the functional distribution, of Platt, i.e. where, when and with whom it is spoken. In particular, this chapter focuses on the functional distribution of Ferguson's category "conversation with family, friends, and colleagues". I show in this chapter that, among the Platt speakers of the 2003 survey, Platt (the L-variety) functions as the preferred language of discourse at home (conversations with family and friends) as well as at work (conversation with colleagues). These findings stand in contrast to those of the aforementioned GETAS study (1984) which concluded that Platt is the preferred language of discourse only in conversations with friends, but that conversations with family members and particularly with colleagues are carried out in Standard German (the H-variety). The results of the 2003 survey, however, show that Platt not only functions as a vital and important language in the professional world among both blue- and white-collar workers, but also that Platt is frequently preferred over Standard German in fairly sophisticated settings, such as political events/meetings or in the banking/financing sector. These results are important for both diglossic studies and Low German research because both disciplines (Ferguson, 1959; and Britto, 1986, for diglossic studies; Stellmacher, 1990, for Low German research) have stressed that any L-variety, including Platt, is not capable of fulfilling sophisticated functions in a professional environment. I argue that the results of the 2003 survey call for a reevaluation of this commonly held assumption.

Chapter five presents and discusses the results of the Non-Platt speakers (i.e. Standard German speakers with no command of Platt) of my survey, and focuses on their language attitudes toward Platt. Ferguson (1959) points out that the H-variety is usually regarded as superior to the L–variety by all members of a diglossic speech community. Numerous studies on language attitudes in diglossia (Papapavlou, 1989; Kristiansen, 2003) have shown that this is, indeed, the case. By examining the language attitudes of the H-speakers from my 2003 survey toward the L-variety, I argue that the notion of the Low-Variety being inferior to H in diglossic speech communities is not always the case. In fact, my data show that

(a) Most H-speakers regard the L-variety as equally sophisticated as the H-variety.

(b) H-speakers have an emotional attachment to the L-variety and regard it as a positive contribution to their quality of life.

(c) Most H-speakers want their children to learn the L-variety and see it as a language variety worthy to be continued to be spoken.

With the possible exception of Switzerland, where the L-variety (Swiss German) is equally popular and respected, the data from the Non-Platt speakers of my 2003 survey demonstrate the unique character of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim. They also show that one of the most persistent, negative images connected with Platt, namely its perceived "backwardness", does not hold true in my target area.

Finally, in chapter six I present and discuss the results of the students from the 2003 survey. The student-participants' data are of particular importance because not only

does my survey constitute one of the first studies on teenagers and Low German language competence/appreciation in the new millennium, but also because the number of young speakers determines the future of Platt. In this chapter I show that the present situation of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim runs contrary to Ferguson's claim that diglossia is a stable phenomenon. Ferguson (1959) and other researchers (Hudson, 2002; Schiffman, 2002) predict that if there is to be a language shift (i.e. a shift of diglossic domains) in diglossic speech communities, then it is in favor of the L-variety. However, previous surveys (Wiggers, 1985; Robben and Robben, 1993) on the status of Platt among children and young adults in northern Germany have shown a strong language shift in favor of the H-variety, i.e. Standard German. In fact, the number of young Platt speakers in these surveys is so low that one cannot really speak of a diglossic situation anymore among the younger generation. The data from my 2003 survey confirm the trend toward the H-variety among young adults. Unlike previous studies, however, my data show a strong town-country division in terms of Low German competence and appreciation with smaller rural communities scoring much higher than urbanized regions. Yet, in spite of higher results in the more rural *Niedergrafschaft* (Lower Grafschaft Bentheim), the overall competence and status of Platt among student-participants from my survey is alarmingly low and indicative of the rapid erosion Platt has been experiencing in the last decades. In the last sections of chapter six I discuss the results of my 2003 study in the context of the world-wide erosion of minority languages and whether recommended measures by the European Union to protect Platt really have any impact on the future of Platt and thus on the future of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORY OF PLATT

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the historical development of Platt. In section 2.1 I give a brief description of the Indo-Europeans, their homeland and their language, of which Platt, like many other languages, is a descendant. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 give an overview of the development and expansion of the Germanic people and their subsequent split into North-Germanic (2.3.1), East Germanic (2.3.2), and the various groups that comprise the West-Germanic language family (2.3.3). Section 2.4 discusses the linguistic changes that took place during the transition from Indo-European to Proto-Germanic. Then, I discuss the German-internal Second Sound Shift, which gave rise to both modern High German and Platt, in detail in section 2.4.4 The remaining sections of this chapter (2.5 - 2.12) are specific to the history of Platt and the dialect of Platt spoken in the Grafschaft Bentheim (*Grafschafter Platt*). Section 2.5 presents a brief overview on the history of the Old Saxon people, whose language was the precursor to modern-day Platt. Section 2.6 takes a look at the Old Saxon language itself and discusses some of the contrasts between Old Saxon and Old High German. Section 2.7 provides a brief history of the rise and decline of the Hanseatic League, which made Middle Low German, the successor of Old Saxon, into one of the most prestigious languages in Northern Europe between the 14th and 16th century. Section 2.8 discusses the main phonological and lexical features of Middle Low German. Section 2.9 describes the decline of Platt as an official language in northern Germany in the 16th and 17th century. Section 2.10 gives an overview of contemporary

Platt both in Northern Germany and in the northeast Netherlands. This section also discusses the division of contemporary Platt into two major groups, East Low German and West Low German, by highlighting their different verbal plural endings. Then, I discuss the results of the GETAS-survey (1984), the only significant survey on the status of Platt in recent decades. Section 2.11 surveys the most important social and historical developments in the area of my research, the Grafschaft Bentheim. Section 2.12 provides a detailed look at Grafschafter Platt, the local variety spoken in my target area. This last section also addresses the historical division of Grafschafter Platt into five principal groups, as well as some main features of this variety of Platt, e.g. the absence of the aspectual marker *ge-*, gender distribution, and the influence of Standard Dutch on its lexicon. This chapter closes with a brief discussion on the present number of Platt speakers in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

2.1 The Indo-Europeans

In order to understand today's linguistic situation in northern Germany it is first necessary to review the history of Platt, its place and its relation to other Germanic languages, and its link with its parent language, Indo-European.

When the classical language of India, Sanskrit, was introduced to European intellectuals in the late 18th century, a comparison of classical European languages, such as Greek and Latin, with Sanskrit, marked the beginning of the field of Indo-European studies. Sir William Jones, then Chief Justice of India, remarked in a lecture (1786) on the affinities of Sanskrit with several European languages:

> "The Sanskrit language, whatever may be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could have been produced by accident, so strong that no philologer could examine them all three without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists."

Jones' ideas inspired various scholars, notably the Danes Rasmus Rask and Karl Verner, and the Germans Jacob Grimm, August Schleicher, and Franz Bopp, to delve further into the subject matter, so that by mid-nineteenth century Indo-European studies were firmly established with major treatises on comparative philology being published. [2]

A subject of much debate, ever since the inception of Indo-European studies, has been the question of the original Indo-European homeland. Some scholars believe the original homeland to be close to the Baltic Sea, while others place it into the steppes of central Russia. Evidence from linguistic reconstruction and archeology, however, points to an area east of the Dnieper river and north of the Caspian Sea, where the tribe of the Proto-Indo-Europeans lived about 5000-6000 B.C.[3] As Waterman points out, the term Indo-European "implies lingustic relationship only" (1991:4). Although the last decades have seen great progress in reconstructing an Indo-European proto-language, the pedigree of its speakers is still largely unknown. It is unknown whether the Indo-European constituted a nation or simply a number of loosely knit tribal organizations, nor can it be said with certainty whether all members of the Indo-European community spoke the same language. It is quite possible that a number of dialects already existed within the proto-

[2] The term "Indo-European" was coined in 1813 by the English scholar Thomas Young in a review of Adelung's *Mithridates*, a multi-volume attempt to ascertain the similarities of the world's languages by comparing translations of the Lord's Prayer.
[3] For a detailed discussion of this problem see Mallory (1989: chapter six).

language. The comparative method of historical linguists, first developed by the German philologist Franz Bopp in 1816[4], who analyzed and compared cognates of the various IE daughter languages, has shed some light on Indo-European their culture. The results indicate that the Proto-Indo-Europeans were hunters and gatherers with probably at least a primitive sort of agriculture. Their society was patriarchal, and the high amount of religious vocabulary found in the various IE daughter languages suggest a fairly well developed form of religion. The reconstructed proto-language itself shows a high degree of complexity with eight cases, three genders, four moods, three voices (Active, Passive, Middle), and six tenses.

This section provided a brief introduction to Indo-European as parent-language of the Indo-European language family.[5] The following sections will discuss the linguistic and historical development of the Germanic branch of this family since both Platt and Standard German derive from it.

2.2 Germanic

The location of the Germanic homeland is less mysterious than the earlier mentioned Indo-European homeland. It comprises the southern part of present-day Sweden, Denmark, and Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany. Although habitation in this area stems back to roughly 10,000 B.C., the Germanic tribes are usually associated

[4] For more information see Watkins (2000: vii).
[5] The languages descending from the Indo-European proto-language are quite numerous and comprise the following language families in alphabetical order: Albanian, Armenian, Baltic, Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Hittite, Indic, Iranian, Italic, Slavic, and Tocharian. Watkins lists no less than 59 present-day daughter languages spoken by roughly one-third of the world's population (Watkins, 2000: 148-149).

with an archeologically distinct group called the "Battle-Ax-People", who arrived in the area during the third millenium B.C.[6] Information about this early period of the Germanic-speaking people remains sketchy. Archeological evidence shows that these tribes extended their territory in the following centuries to the Vistula in the east, the Rhine river in the west, and the mountain ranges of central Germany in the south. Further southward expansions brought them eventually into contact with the Celts and Romans. While relationships with the Roman Empire were often hostile and resulted in numerous battles, the writings of Latin and Greek historians from both just before and after the birth of Christ, furnish us with the first information about the culture and the language of the early Germanic people[7]. It was not until the second century A.D. that we find documents written by the Germanic people themselves. These are the so-called *runic* inscriptions, that were carved into metal, stone, bones, or wood by using a set of distinctive symbols called *runes* (this proto-Germanic alphabet is also called *futhark* after the sound values of its first six letters). [8]

Both Tacitus and Julius Caesar in his *Bellum Gallicum* describe the early Germanic tribes as barbarians; a semi-nomadic people living off of their livestock with little hunting or fishing. Unlike the Roman Empire the Germanic peoples settled in tribes which were further seperated by clans (Stockman, 1998: 26-27), a pre-condition for the various languages and dialects to come out of Proto-Germanic. As Green pointed out, the

[6] For more information see Waterman (1991: 39-42).
[7] The most well known document of this kind is *Germania* written by the Roman historian Tacitus in approximately A.D. 98.
[8] The field of runology has grown considerably in the last decades. For a good introduction, see Robinson (1992: chapter four).

sole reliance on Roman sources, or an *interpretatio Romana*, clearly has its dangers, for these classical historians largely depended on "chance reports from military and trading sources" (Green, 2000: 11), and were in general grappling with a still unexplored world. Their information may also have been quite distorted due to both self-serving purposes (i.e. justification for further conquests), and the difficulty of describing different concepts in the framework of established conventions. It was not until relatively recent times that scholars such as Green and others have been trying to rectify the long accepted Roman interpretation of the early Germanic tribes by pointing to their complex laws and societal structures, as well as to the rich religious beliefs these people held.[9]

The territorial expansion of the Germanic speaking area brought with it the splitting up of the Proto-Germanic people into separate linguistic groups which eventually gave rise to the present-day Germanic languages and dialects.

2.3 North-Germanic, East-Germanic, West-Germanic

The reason for the expansion of the Germanic speaking area is usually attributed to overpopulation and frequent inundations of the original homeland (Waterman, 1991: 20). By the first Christian century this series of migrations out of the homeland had resulted in establishing five separate groups, each of which eventually developed into a set of

[9] For a detailed discussion see Green (2000: 1-8).

distinct languages and dialects. It must be kept in mind, though, that the differences between all five groups were of a primarily cultural nature, and that until at least 300 B.C. these five respective dialects of Proto-Germanic were mutually intelligible (Robinson, 1992: 16). The following sections will give a brief sketch on the further fate of these five groups with an emphasis on West-Germanic since Platt is a descendant of this language group.

2.3.1 North-Germanic

The North Germanic group (*Nordgermanen*) stayed closest to the original homeland in lower Scandinavia. By the mid-eighth century these northernmost Germanic peoples were becoming a constant source of terror for much of northern and middle Europe, for the Danish and Norwegian *vikingar*, professional pirates, raided their neighbors' coasts from the sea without warning often slashing and burning their way further inward. This subgroup's version of Proto-Germanic is called Old Norse, which eventually gave rise to modern Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic, and Faroese. The Old Norse group is of particular interest since it gives us some of the richest and most beautiful documents of any Germanic language in the form of the Old Icelandic *sagas*, notably the *Edda*.[10]

[10] For an introduction to Old Norse see Valfells/Cathey (1981).

2.3.2 East-Germanic

The East-Germanic group (*Ostgermanen*), called Gothic after their two main proponents,the Visigoths (West-Goths) and the Ostrogoths (East-Goths), migrated furthest from the homeland. It would be too much for our purposes to detail the various migrations and wanderings of both groups throughout Europe; suffice it here to say that by the late eighth century both groups had ceased to exist as a distinct ethnic and linguistic group in Europe.[11] Apart from several smaller texts, the main Gothic document that survived is a Bible translation (c.a.350) by the Visigothic bishop Wulfila (ca. 311-381).[12]

2.3.3 West-Germanic

The remaining three groups comprise the West-Germanic language family (*Westgermanen*). Historical linguists distinguish within this group, which spread from the Oder in the east to as far as modern Belgium in the west, the North-Sea Germanic group (*Nordseegermanen*), the Weser-Rhein group (*Weser-Rhein Germanen*), and the Elbe group (*Elbgermanen*). In his work *Germania* on the early Germanic tribes Tacitus noted that the Germanic people themselves called these three subgroups of West-Germanic *Ingvaeones* (the North-Sea group), *Istvaeones* (the Weser-Rhein group), and *Irmiones* (the Elbe group) respectively.

The Elbe-Germans (*Irmionen*) of the West-Germanic group settled in present-day

[11] For a detailed discussion see Robinson (1992: chapter 3).
[12] For an introduction to the Gothic language see Bennett (1980).

Schwaben and Bavaria, while the *Langobardi*, another member of this group, found their way into Italy where they established the kingdom of Lombardy. While the latter group was eventually absorbed by the native Italian population, the former continued to speak German, and their form of Proto-Germanic developed into the present-day German dialects of Swabian and Bavarian respectively.

The Weser-Rhein group (*Istväonen*) occupied parts of present-day western Germany, most of the Netherlands and Belgium, and large parts of northern France. Through various migrations and settlements this group gave rise to dialects as diverse as Hessian and Franconian on the one side, and Lower Franconian, the ancestor of modern Dutch, on the other side. [13] Frankish elements and influences are also to be found in Old French, the country's name itself *France* obviously being a product of this period.

The Ingvaeonic group, or North-Sea Germans, is of chief interest for the historical and linguistic development of Platt and will be discussed in greater detail here. The main proponents of this group were the tribes of the Saxons, Angles, and Frisians, who settled on the North-Sea shores after leaving the Germanic homeland. According to the eighth-century Northumbrian historian and monk Bede, Saxon tribes were hired as mercenaries by the British Celts around the mid-fifth century to help fight incursions from the North by the Scots and the Picts. These Saxons soon settled in the southwestern part of modern-day Britain and eventually turned against their former employers initiating a wave of Ingvaeonic migrations from the continent to England. By 600 almost all of southern Britain was under Anglo-Saxon control, with the native Celts being pushed to

[13] For a detailed discussion on the development of Dutch see Brachin (1985).

the westernmost parts of the British Isle, Wales and Cornwall, where the Celtic languages continued to be spoken. While the new rulers of Britain, who often fought among themselves, expanded their territory northward up to the Scottish border, their tongues, Saxon and Anglian, eventually developed into Old English, the ancestor of present-day English.[14] Due to recurring Viking attacks and conquests, which began with the sacking of the Lindisfarne Priory in 793 and continued for the next centuries, the development of Old English was heavily influenced by Old Norse. Finally, in 1066 the famous battle of Hastings put an end to the Anglo-Saxon state, and Britain fell under the rule of French-speaking Normans.[15]

The Saxons who remained on the continent, called Continental Saxons, or "OldSaxons" by their cousins across the British Channel, expanded their territory southward into modern-day Westphalia (late 600s), where they later clashed with the Frankish Empire to the south. The Old Saxon language is regarded as the ancestor of Platt and will be discussed in more detail in section 2.5.

The Frisian tribes, finally, remained on the shores of the North-Sea shores and expanded eastwards and southwards. In the 7th and 8th century Frisian was spoken from the northern shores of present-day Belgium to Denmark.[16] In the course of time, however, Frisian was absorbed by the mightier national languages Dutch, German, and Danish, respectively. Although regarded as an important linguistic link between

[14] For a detailed history of Old English see Millward (1996, 76-139).
[15] Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) literature is one of the most copious of all older Germanic languages. Many poems are preserved and several epics, chief among them the famous *Beowulf*.
[16] For an introduction to Old Frisian see Robinson (1992: chapter 7).

English and Dutch, or English and German, Frisian had little influence on the development of Low German. It continues to be spoken in small pockets in Germany and Denmark, but was made an official language alongside Dutch only in the northern Dutch province of Friesland.[17]

The intricate linguistic situation of the West-Germanic group led many scholars to the conclusion that a linguistic unity, i.e. common "Proto-West-Germanic", never existed (Stedje, 1989:51). It is, however, without doubt that one of the most prominent members of this group, Old Saxon, is the direct ancestor to Platt. In order to understand the unique features of the Old Saxon language, it is first necessary to take a look at the linguistic development of Proto-Germanic, which will be outlined in the following section.

2.4 Changes from Indo-European to Proto-Germanic

The transition from IE to Proto-Germanic brought about several important linguistic changes. All Germanic languages, including Old Saxon and its cousin Old High German, shared the grammatical changes outlined in this section, whereas the lexical changes (see 2.4.2.) were certainly not uniform. Finally, the phonological changes (see 2.4.3.) are regarded as a divisive rather than a common factor among the various Germanic languages and dialects. It would go, however, beyond the purpose of this work to provide a detailed analysis of all the complex changes that the various Germanic

[17] For more information, see McArthur, (1992: 421-22).

languages underwent in their transformation from Proto-Germanic into distinct national languages and dialects.[18]

2.4.1 Grammatical Changes

The most distinct feature in the transition period from IE to PG was fixing the stress of the accent in any word to the first (root) syllable. This innovation stood in contrast to the IE parent-language, which operated with a movable accent pattern still to be observed in some modern-day daughter languages, such as Russian and Greek. The initial stress of the accent played an important role in early Germanic poetry, the ON *Edda*, OE *Beowulf*, and OS *Heliand* all making rich use of it through alliteration (*Stabreim*).[19]

The Germanic preference for stressing the first syllable of a word also caused changes to its inflectional pattern, both noun and verb endings undergoing various degrees of attrition. Perhaps as a result of this change, the rich case system IE was thought to have had (see 2.1.) was reduced in PG from eight to four, with IE vocative falling together with PG nominative, whereas IE ablative, locative, and instrumental all merged with PG dative.

Another Germanic innovation was the extension of an IE vocalic alternation, called *Ablaut*, a feature of the IE parent-language in which, to a certain extent, the two chief IE vowels *e* and *o* were interchangeable. The Germanic languages fully grammaticalized this linguistic aspect of their ancestors to distinguish between the

[18] For a detailed discussion see Robinson (1992: chapters 1+2).
[19] For more information see Schmidt (1969: 343-345).

present and the past tense of verbs. Historical grammars of Germanic languages classify these irregular, or "strong" verbs (a coinage by Jakob Grimm), into six or seven Ablaut classes. To illustrate this innovation I give here an example of the third Ablaut class in Old High German, New High German, Old Saxon, Platt, Standard Dutch, and modern English:

Table 2.1: The Ablaut Principle in the Germanic Languages

Language	Infinitive	Preterite Singular	Preterite Plural	Past Participle
OHG	trinkan	trank	trunkum	gitrunkan
NHG	trinken	trank	--	getrunken
OS	drinkan	drank	drunkum	gidrunkan
Platt	drinken	dronk	--	gedronken
Dutch	drinken	dronk	--	gedronken
Engl.	drink	drank	--	drunk

Table 2.1 shows that the Ablaut principle is still readily recognizable in all Germanic languages including Platt.[20] However, as Stedje (1989) noted, the many complex, linguistic changes within these languages make a grouping of Ablaut patterns into classes interesting for the historical linguist only (1989: 49).

The last major grammatical innovation worth mentioning here is the introduction of an adjectival declension that is marked by distinguishing between "weak" and "strong" attributive adjectives. The traditional structural pattern in the parent language was to decline adjectives in the same manner as nouns, a paradigm that is reflected in many of its daughter languages, notably Latin. The Germanic languages departed from this traditional pattern by creating a distinction between "strong" attributive adjectives, which

[20] A discussion of the Ablaut in Twents, the Dutch equivalent of *Grafschafter Platt*, can be found in Wanink (1948: 12-23).

had a mixture of nominal and pronominal endings, and "weak" attributive adjectives, which had purely nominal endings.[21]

This section has shown some of the most important grammatical changes that took place during the transition period from IE to PG. The grammatical changes of this period constitute the only uniform changes to which all Germanic languages were subjected. The lexical and phonological changes, which are discussed in the following sections, probably occurred at a later time when the various Germanic languages had already established distinct features, and were therefore not shared by all descendants of Proto-Germanic.

2.4.2 Lexical Changes

The paucity of early documents in the Germanic languages makes it rather difficult to account for the lexical changes and inventions that Proto-Germanic and its daughter languages underwent. The speakers of Proto-Germanic retained a lot of words from the IE parent language. On the other hand, authors such as Waterman estimate that about 25% of the lexicon of modern German is uniquely Germanic in origin, with no discernible connection to IE. The expansion of the PG lexicon is especially evident in areas such as warfare, animal husbandry, hunting, and seafaring (Waterman 1991: 35-37). Although Waterman (1991: 36) and other scholars explain this lexical expansion by reasoning that the Germanic tribes drew from their own resources, the possibility must be taken into account that they actually borrowed from a non-IE substratum. The food

[21] For a more detailed discussion see Waterman (1991: 31-33).

gatherers and megalithic builders who lived in the Germanic homeland prior to the arrival of the Germanic tribes were of unknown origin, and their languages, whatever they might have been, could have had a profound influence on the PG lexicon.

Like so many other languages, Germanic borrowed heavily from Latin both during and after the time of the Roman Empire. Since all modern Germanic languages exhibit Latin borrowings, we may assume that many of these words were borrowed during the period of Germanic linguistic unity. [22]

This section discussed the internal and external factors that contributed to the formation of a unique, and rich lexicon in the various Germanic languages. The last changes from IE to PG to be discussed here are two separate, massive sound shifts which had a decisive impact on the development of both OHG and OS.

2.4.3 Phonological Changes - The First Sound Shift

The most dramatic changes from IE to PG took place at the phonological level. Indeed, it is this category that separates the Germanic languages from all other IE languages, and sharply set them off from the IE parent language. Sometime in the development of PG a series of sound changes occurred that revolved around the IE voiceless stops *p, t, k*, and the voiced stops *b, d, g*. [23] These stops changed to PG *th, f, x* (later *h*), and *p, t, k* respectively. These drastic, phonological changes are specified in

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[22] For more information see Stedje (1989: 55-56; 66-68).
[23] The IE voiced aspirated stops *bh, dh*, and *gh* were also involved in this sound shift but played a minor role. For more information see Waterman (1991: 24-26).

Table 2.2 with Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit serving as the unaffected IE languages, and various Germanic languages showing the outcome for Germanic.

Table 2.2: Examples of the First Sound Shift in Germanic Languages

Lat.: *pater* Skt. *pitar*	Engl. *father* Swed. *fader*
Lat. *tres* Gk. *treis*	Engl. *three* OS *thria*
Lat. *cor* Gk. *kardia*	Engl. *heart* Go. *hairtô*
Lat. *decem*	Engl. *ten* Dutch *tien*
Lat. *genu*	Engl. *knee* Germ. *Knie*

The first discovery of this massive sound shift is attributed to the Danish philologist Rask, who in 1818 published an essay about this phenomenon. It is, however, the German scholar Jakob Grimm who is usually credited with its discovery, hence also the popular term "Grimm's Law" for the entire phenonemon in general. [24] Neither the cause nor the chronology of the Germanic Sound Shift has ever been sufficiently explained. As Waterman puts it: "In this area our ignorance is almost complete" (1991: 28). However, based on internal evidence it can be concluded that this sound shift or the mechanisms that caused it came to a standstill at around 500 B.C. [25] While the Germanic Sound Shift separated the Germanic languages from other IE daughter languages, the so-called

[24] The common scientific term for this phonological change is "The First Sound Shift" or "The Germanic Sound Shift".
[25] Waterman (1991: 27-28).

Second Sound Shift, to be discussed in detail in the next section, was of crucial importance for the development of both OS and Platt.

2.4.4 The Second Sound Shift

The most important linguistic feature for the emergence of Platt was the so-called Second or High-German Sound Shift (*zweite* or *hochdeutsche Lautverschiebung*). This sound shift, which occurred about 1000 years after the completion of the First Sound Shift, created a schism within the Germanic language family, since it affected the OHG dialects only.[26] As was the case in the First Sound Shift, the Second Sound Shift also revolved around the voiceless PG stops *p, t, k* (IE *b, d, g*). Below, I present examples from the unaffected OS language, from which Platt derived, and OHG (Robinson, 1992: 240) with equivalents in Standard German and Grafschafter Platt whenever possible:

a) *p, t, g* became OHG voiceless geminate fricatives *ff, ss* (spelled *zz*), *kk* (spelled *hh* or *ch*) medially between vowels:

[26] For a detailed chronology of the Second Sound Shift see Waterman (1991: 59-62).

Table 2.3a: OHG *p, t, g* Medially between Vowels

Old High German	Old Saxon	Platt	German	English
offan	opan	--	öffnen	(to) open
ezzan	etan	etten	essen	(to) eat
mahhôn	makôn	maken	machen	(to) make

b) *p, t, g* became OHG voiceless fricatives *f, s* (spelled *z*, modern German often *ß*), *h* in final position, often after a long vowel:

Table 2.3b: OHG *p, t, g* in Final Position

Old High German	Old Saxon	Platt	German	English
skif	skip	schip	Schiff	ship
hwaz	hwat	wat	was	what
ih	ik	ik	ich	I

c) *p, t, g* became OHG voiceless affricates *pf*, *ts* (spelled *z*), and *kx* (spelled *kh* or *ch*) in word-initial position, medially following a consonant, or in gemination:

Table 2.3c: OHG *p, t, q* in Word-Initial Position, Medially Following a Consonant, and in Gemination

Old High German	Old Saxon	Platt	German	English
pflegan	plegan	plegen	pflegen	(to tend)[27]
herza	herta	hart	Herz	heart
wechan	wekkian	wekken	wecken	(to) wake

It should be noted that the shift from [g] to [kx] survived in Swiss German only, with the other upper German dialects eventually shifting back to [k], compare Swiss German *s' Chind* and Standard German *das Kind*.

After its inception this sound shift was transported further north and began to affect the mid-German dialects as well. One of the most remarkable features of this change, however, is the fact that it did not reach Germany's (and Europe's) northern regions, i.e. Old Saxon, Frisian, Old Low Franconian, Old English, and all North-Germanic languages were not affected by it. In fact, philologists have established an isogloss, the so-called *Benrath-Line* (just south of present-day Düsseldorf), that divides the areas that were affected and unaffected by this sound shift. Modern-day linguistic evidence, such as "*der Peffer"* from the Rhine region around Cologne, the so-called Rhenish Fan (*Rheinischer Fächer*), shows that this phonological shift did indeed run out of steam in this area. The reason or reasons why the Second Sound Shift never extended any further north than Düsseldorf are unknown (Waterman, 1991: 56). Rivalry between the Frankish Empire in the south and the Saxons in the north could very well be an explanation for this phenomenon, but must ultimately remain a speculation. The Low

[27] Compare OE *plegan/plegian* (to busy oneself, to exercise) and modern English *to play*.

German dialects in the north, among them Grafschafter Platt and Twenter Platt, were in any case not affected by this sound shift, which constitutes one of the sharpest distinctions between Standard German and Platt. In fact, the occurrence or non-occurrence of the Second Sound Shift remains to this day the "primary referential by which all [German] dialect groups can be identified." (Noble, 1983: 33).

In this section we have seen how the Second Sound Shift (High-German Sound Shift) set the stage for two sharply divergent dialect groups within the German speaking area, depending on the degree of implementation of this consonant shift. OS and the dialects that later emerged from it were unaffected by this shift and remain so to this day. We now turn to a brief overview of the history of the Old Saxons, and the chief linguistic characteristics of the Old Saxon language.

2.5 A brief History of the Old Saxons

The Saxons were first mentioned by the Greek geographer Ptolemy (5 A.D.), who originally located them near the North Sea between the river Elbe and the Jutland peninsula. The term "Saxon" initially only applied to a small tribe east of the Elbe (Holthausen, 1921: § 6). In the following centuries they merged both forcibly and amicably with other Germanic tribes, notably the Chauci (Robinson, 1992: 100), and started to invade territories to the west and to the south of their homeland. By the mid-ninth century the Saxons state extended from the Ijsselmeer in the west to the river Elbe in the east, comprising most of modern-day Niedersachsen, and parts of present-day Schleswig-Holstein, Nordrhein-Westfalen, as well as parts of northern Netherlands with

the Frisians and Danes as their northernmost neighbors (Robinson, 1992: 103).[28] The relationship with the Frankish Empire to the south, although apparently friendly at first (Robinson, 1992: 101-109), soon turned hostile. In 772 the Imperial Council in Worms under Charlemagne declared war on the Saxons followed by a series of Frankish invasions into Saxon territory which ended with the complete annexation of Saxony in 782. Although frequent subsequent uprisings against the Frankish conquerors were undertaken, by 804 the Saxons were fully incorporated into the Frankish Empire, and were from then on linked with the history of the Holy Roman Empire (Robinson, 1992: 108). Although the Saxons were a conquered nation after 804, their language continued to be spoken and will be discussed in 2.6.

2.6 The Old Saxon Language

This section gives a brief summary of the main differences between OS and OHG, and its modern-day counter parts Platt and Standard Modern German.[29] According to Stellmacher (1990: 19), Old Saxon was spoken from about 500-1200, and is usually divided into an older period (from about 500-800) which is very poorly attested, and a newer period (from 800-1200) which constitutes the classical age of this language.

One of the biggest differences between OS and the OHG dialects spoken south of the Saxon territory was the aforementioned complete absence of the Second Sound Shift in OS (see 2.4.). Another striking phonological phenomenon of OS is the so-called nasal

[28] For a more detailed discussion on the political and geographical aspects, see Robinson (1992: chapter 5); and Holthausen, (1921: chapter 2).
[29] For a detailed introduction to the Old Saxon language, see Holthausen (1921), and Cathey (2002).

loss (*Nasalschwund*), i.e. the loss of nasals between a vowel and any of the voiceless friccatives *f*, *th*, and *s*, a feature that is shared with Old English, Old Low Franconian, Swiss German, and, partly, with Old Norse. Some examples of this phenomenon are given in table 2.4:

Table 2.4: Nasal Loss in Old Saxon and its Descendants

Old Saxon	Platt	Old High German	Modern German	English
fif	fief	fimf	fünf	five
us	us/ons[30]	uns	uns	us
cuth	--	kund	kund	known

Old Saxon also displays distinct pronouns not to be found in OHG which innovated its pronouns considerably. The old pronouns are still in use in modern Platt, and are exemplified in table 2.5 by the third person nominative masculine pronoun *he*, and the second person plural nominative pronoun *you:*

Table 2.5: Divergent Pronouns in Old Saxon and Old High German

Old Saxon	Platt	Old High German	Modern German
hê	he	er	er
gi	ie	ir	ihr

Another major, pronominal contrast between the two languages is the OS innovation of merging the accusative and dative of the first and second person singular personal pronouns, illustrated in table 2.6a and 2.6b:

[30] The presence of the nasal in *ons* constitutes an Old High German interference. For more information see Robinson (1992: 122-23), and Stellmacher (1990: 54).

Table 2.6a: OS Mergers in the Accusative Case

Old Saxon	Platt	Old High German	Modern German	English
mî	mi(e)	mih	mich	me
mî	mi(e)	mir	mir	(to) me

Table 2.6b: OS Mergers in the Dative Case

Old Saxon	Platt	Old High German	Modern German	English
thî[31]	di(e)	dih	dich	you
thî	di(e)	dir	dir	(to) you

Tables 2.6a and 2.6b show that modern Platt retains the OS merger of the accusative and dative pronouns, as well as the Modern German pronouns being a continuation of OHG.

In verb morphology, OS and Platt employ the so-called common plural (*Einheitsplural*), i.e. all verbs receive the same ending in the plural. The present and past tense plural conjugation of the verb *niman* (to take) serves as an example in table 2.7a and 2.7b:

[31] Cf. English *me* and Middle English *thee*.

Table 2.7a: The Present Tense Plural Forms of *niman*

Old Saxon	*Platt*	Old High German	Modern German	English
wi nimad	*wie nemmt*	nemumes	wir nehmen	we take
gi nimad	*ie nemmt*	nemet	ihr nehmt	you take
sia/siu nimad	*se nemmt*	nemant	sie nehmen	they take

Table 2.7b: The Past Tense Plural Forms of *niman*

Old Saxon	*Platt*	Old High German	Modern German	English
wi namun	*wie nömmen*	namun	wir nahmen	we took
gi namun	*Ie nömmen*	namut	ihr nahmt	you took
sia/siu namun	*se nömmen*	namun	sie nahmen	they took

As can be seen from these tables, the common plural of Old Saxon has been preserved in contemporary Platt and remains one of the most striking differences between Standard German and Platt.

Apart from a few short, minor documents the main OS document is the *Hêliand*, an OS adoption of the four Gospels. Written in ca. 850 A.D. by an unknown author this document is preserved in 5,983 lines and composed in *Stabreim* (see 2.4.1).[32] Due to this paucity of textual material the entire lexicon of OS amounts to ca. 4,000 words (Stellmacher, 1990: 33), many of them of a poetic nature. The scarcity of documentary evidence of commonplace documents on the one hand, and the elevated, poetic structure of the *Hêliand* on the other hand make a lexical comparison of OS and OHG rather difficult. However, scholars of OS, such as Stellmacher (1990) and Sanders (1982), conclude that there existed "ausgeprägte Verschiedenheiten in Wortbildung und

[32] For a detailed discussion of the *Hêliand*, see Cathey (2002), and Murphy (1989).

Wortschatz"[33] between the two languages (Sanders, 1982: 40). Keller (1978) points out that Old Saxon must be regarded as an independent Germanic language which, at least during the Carolingian Period (ca. 700 to 1000 A.D.), stood apart from OHG and its major dialect groups Bavarian, Alemannic, and Franconian:

> Old Saxon is accorded the position of a distinct Germanic language. On purely linguistic grounds a case can no doubt be made out. There are a large number of features which separate Old High German and Old Saxon, and many which link Old Saxon more closely with other Germanic languages. (1978: 146)

This section has shown the main differences between OS and OHG, and the unique position of OS among the various West-Germanic dialects between 700 to 1000. Due to the continuing Frankish presence and influence the original OS language slowly faded after 1200, and by 1300 it had developed into its next stage, Middle Low German which will be discussed in the following section.

2.7 Middle Low German and the Hanseatic League - a brief History

The period of Middle Low German (ca. 1250 - 1650) can be characterized as the Golden Age of Platt. The development of Middle Low German, i.e. its rise and fall, is closely connected to that of the Hanseatic League, a mercantile organization of cities in and around the Baltic Sea and the North Sea[34]. During its heyday in the 14th and 15th century the *Hanse*[35], under the leadership of the northern German city of Lübeck, was the mightiest mercantile union in all of Northern Europe. With more than 200 member cities (Sanders, 1982: 127), its influence stretched from Flanders in the west to Novgorod,

[33] "marked differences in word formation and vocabulary" – *my translation.*
[34] For a detailed discussion see Dollinger (1964).
[35] From OHG and Goth. *hansa,* and OE *hôs* (band of warriors).

Russia in the east, and from central Germany in the south to Norway in the north. The common language of this federation of cities was Platt, based on the dialect of Lübeck. Starting in the early 14th century, for the first time in its history, Platt became standardized including a uniform orthography and lexicon (*Lübecker Norm*).[36] The prestige of this new, standardized Platt was so great that various other languages, notably the Scandinavian ones, started to borrow massively from it. It is, for example, estimated that "a third of the words in Swedish are of Hanseatic origin" (Dollinger, 1964: 261). Although its prestige at this time was comparable to that of present-day Paris French or Oxford English, it should be pointed out that Hanseatic Platt was primarily a written language. Its functional distribution can be divided into three areas: 1) commerce and trade, 2) law and diplomacy, and 3) literature.[37] As such it was the spoken language of the upper classes of society, or as Sanders puts it:

> Die eigentlichen Träger des Mittelniederdeutschen waren […] die Kaufmannschaft, […] die hansestädtischen Magistrate, und […] schließlich das gebildete Bürgertum und die Geistlichkeit. (1982: 150)[38]

The decline of the *Hanse* began in the early 16th century, and can be attributed to a number of factors. Politically, the leading status of the city of Lübeck in the Baltic region was challenged by the Scandinavian states, who were developing strong, national monarchies. Economically, the status of the *Hanse* as foremost maritime power was

[36] For a detailed discussion see Sanders (1982: 142-145).
[37] Quite often, these areas were fused as in Eike von Repgow's famous *Sachsenspiegel* (ca. 1225), a book of Hanseatic codes and laws. The word *Spiegel* (mirror) here means *Regelbuch* (book of rules). Von Repgow is widely regarded as one of the founders of judicial prose in northern Europe.
[38] "The actual speakers of Middle Low German were the merchants, the Hanseatic magistrates, and also the bourgeosie as well as the clergy" – my translation.

broken by the Dutch, who were entering their Golden Age, and by powerful mercantile families from southern Germany, such as the *Fugger*.[39]

This weakening of the *Hanseatic League* had grave consequences for the further fate of Platt. Within a century it yielded its position as the primary written language in the North to High German, and the former cohesiveness of Hanseatic days collapsed into a multitude of different dialects. The advance of High German in northern Germany led to the ultimate replacement of Platt in almost all areas. This development, whose repercussions continue to this day, will be discussed in more detail in 2.9. First, we will take a look at the Middle Low German language itself in the following section.

2.8 The Middle Low German Language

It is relatively difficult to reconstruct a clear transition from OS to MLG. For almost 150 years, after around 1100, all documents from the Saxon-speaking area appear in Latin. This gap of textual evidence, often described as the result of the *Ottonische Renaissance* (Sanders, 1982: 122), make it rather difficult to assert that MLG can be defined as the clear continuation of OS. This problem is all the more heightened by the fact that Middle High German began its development ca. 1050, a full two hundred years earlier than its cousin Middle Low German. At a time when authors such as Walther von der Vogelweide, or Hartmann von Aue were elevating MHG to the high art of *Minnesang* (ca. 1200), the MLG period had not even begun in terms of a written language.

[39] For a detailed discussion see Dollinger (1964).

The rich legacy of the *Hanse*, however, provides ample evidence of the structure and lexicon of MLG. As was the case with OS (see 2.6), this section will focus on the differences between MLG and MHG, but will also discuss the growing linguistic influence of the High German dialects on the Low German language. [40]

As Stockman (1998: 69) remarks, "the Middle Low German language was surprisingly similar to its contemporary Middle High German." On a phonological level, this similarity can be seen in the attrition and weakening of MLG case endings, a development that was shared with MHG as can be seen in table 2.8:

Table 2.8: The Weakening of MLG Case Endings

Old Saxon	***MLG***	**MHG**	**Modern German**	**English**
dagos	*dage*	tac	(der) Tag	Day
hirdi	*herde*	hirte	(der) Hirte	shepherd
herta	*herte*	herze	(das) Herz	Heart
sunu	*sone*	sun	(der) Sohn	Son

Another phonological development of MHG, however, that was not shared by MLG was the significant diphthongization of the long vowels *i, u,* and *iu* to *ai/ei, au,* and *eu/äu* respectively. This process started around 1100 in the Austrian Alpine regions and then gradually spread north. By the time of Early New High German (ca. 1400) this change had affected most High German dialects with eventually only Platt preserving the

[40] For an introduction to the Middle Low German language see Stellmacher (1990, 39-69).

old monophthongs.[41] Table 2.9 shows some examples of this process from MHG, ENHG, Platt, and Standard German:

Table 2.9: The Diphthongization of the Long Vowels *i,u,and iu* in MHG

MHG	**ENHG**	***Platt***	**Modern German**	**English**
bi	bei	*bi*	bei	By
min	mein	*min*	mein	My
hus	Haus	*hus*	Haus	House
tusend	tausend	*dusend*	tausend	thousand
hiuser	Häuser	*husen/huses*	Häuser	Houses

The clear distinction in table 2.9 between the diphthongs and monophthongs of the two languages does not constitute the first time that Platt was unaffected by a diphthongization process in High German. Already in OS times certain Frankish dialects had raised the PG long vowels *ê* and *ô* to *ei* and *au* respectively. The results of this shift for Platt and Standard German are exemplified in table 2.10.[42]

[41] For more information see Prokosch (1916, 141-144).
[42] For a detailed explanation see Waterman (1991: 66-67).

Table 2.10: The Diphthongization of the Long Vowels *ê* and *ô* in OHG

OS	**OHG**	***Platt***	**Modern German**	**English**
stên	stein	*steen*	Stein	Stone
bôm	baum	*boom*	Baum	Tree

Table 2.10 illustrates that Platt, rather than diphthongizing these vowels, retained the old long vowels *ê* and *ô* now written as *ee* and *oo*. To this day, the monophthong/diphthong contrast of Platt and Standard German remains one of the most obvious differences between the two languages.

The biggest influence of High German can be seen in the Low German lexicon. The Frankish-driven Christianization of the Saxons, and the installation of the Frankish administrative system led to the introduction of entire branches of new words, while other, older OS words disappeared from the lexicon.[43] Some examples of this lexical change are given in table 2.11, the results for modern-day Platt bearing a strong resemblance with Modern Standard German.

[43] For more information see Sanders (1982: 101-104).

Table 2.11: The Influence of OHG on the OS Lexicon

OS	**OHG**	***Platt***	**Modern German**	**English**
af	fona	*van*	von	Of
soth	war	*woar*	wahr	true[44]
dôm	urdêli	*oordeel*	(das) Urteil	judgement[45]
heofon	himil	*hemmel*	(der) Himmel	Heaven
---	scepino	*schöffe*	(der) Schöffe	member of a jury

This section has highlighted some of the divergent aspects of MLG and MHG, and the growing influence of High German in the North. The following section examines the main reasons for the advance of High German and the resulting decline of Platt.

2.9 The Decline of Platt as an Official Language

During the 16th century High German replaced Platt as a written language in almost the entire North. There are a number of different factors which led to this development. Chief among them was the already mentioned waning power of the *Hanse* (see 2.7). Since Hanseatic Platt was mainly a written language its fate was closely tied to the language of the chanceries. As Sanders points out, many chanceries began to employ writers from the south due to increasing economical and political contacts with southern German cities (1982: 158). Keller (1978) notes that correspondence in Middle High German with cities in the south became somewhat of a norm early on:

> North German cities had early formed the habit of corresponding in High German with cities in the south, for example Danzig with Leipzig or Lübeck with Mainz (1978: 376).

[44] Compare English *soothsayer*.
[45] Compare English *doomsday*.

The presence of administrators from Middle-and South Germany eventually led to the use of High German as the language of administration in many northern German cities. During the course of the 16th century the chanceries of almost every major city in northern Germany switched to High German, so that by the beginning of the 17th century Low German as a written language was dead.[46]

Another, perhaps even more fateful development in northern Germany was the gradual rejection of Platt by the upper classes. The same people who only half a century earlier wrote and spoke Hanseatic Platt, in other words the representatives of this language, began to develop a decidedly negative attitude toward Platt. The dialect now favored by the upper classes of the North was *Meißnisch*, a relatively new form of High German that was based on the language of the Saxon court and chanceries.[47] The change in language loyalty of the intelligentsia and the nobility toward Platt constitutes for scholars like Sanders the main reason for the decline of this language:

> Der Hauptgrund dürfte doch die innere Einstellung, und zwar eben die Einstellung der kulturell maßgebenden Oberschicht, gegenüber dieser Sprache [Platt] sein. (1982: 156)[48]

It was also during this time (late 16th century) that the common, and until then neuter term for the language, "Platt", began to acquire a pejorative meaning. Platt and its speakers were now associated with being backward and unsophisticated, a process that

[46] This development is fairly well documented, for more details see Sanders (1982: 160-61); and Stellmacher (1991: 70). The last cities to make the internal change from Middle Low German to Middle High German were Hamburg and Lübeck, both shortly after 1600 (for more information see Keller, 1978: 375-377)

[47] This dialect belongs to the East High German group and enjoyed great prestige in all of Germany from the 16th to the 18th century.

[48] "The main reason was the attitude toward this language, i.e. the attitude of the culturally important upper class." - my translation.

continues up to this day. Keller (1978) points out that the invention of the printing press was also a contributing factor to the change in language loyalty among educated circles in northern Germany:

> The printing press was an invention of the south and had its leading houses there […]. Books in High German were available in large numbers and, given the perennial respect for High German, easily penetrated into northern educated circles. (1978: 376)

It must be kept in mind, however, that the chanceries and courts of northern Germany did not attempt to outlaw the use of Platt altogether, i.e. they never issued any language-decrees or similar documents to enforce the use of High German.

A not inconsiderable role in the development of Platt, indeed in the development of the German language in general, was played by Martin Luther's Bible translation from Latin into German in 1522. Luther grew up with both MHG and MLG in an area that is today *Sachsen-Anhalt* and *Thüringen*. He was very much aware of the dialects of his time and tried to create a balanced standard language in his Bible translation " *daß mich beide, Ober-und Niederländer verstehen mögen*." ("that both people from the upper lands and the lower lands might understand me" - my translation.) Even though he made some lexical concessions to Platt, Waterman points out that "Luthers *Bibeldeutsch* definitely favors East Middle [High] German usage" (1991: 129).[49] In fact, Luther himself believed that *die gemeine teutsche sprach* ("the common German language") was best reflected by the German of the Royal Saxon chancery. The Reformer's teachings were widely and immediately accepted in northern Germany, and his words carried an

[49] Some examples are Low German *Ufer* (shore), *krank* (sick), and *Lippe* (lip) instead of High German *Gestade, siech,* and *Lefze* respectively. For more information see Stellmacher (1990: 72-74).

enormous influence there.[50] The advanced technology of the printing press made it possible for Luther's *Bibeldeutsch* (Bible German) to be spread very quickly in northern Germany.[51] This had as its consequence that Platt yielded to High German as church language.[52]

The loss of the religious domain was accompanied by the gradual abolition of Platt as language of instruction in schools. By the early 17th century all schoolbooks in northern Germany had to be written in High German. The linguistic development of the schools constitutes perhaps one of the first instances of official language planning in northern Germany since many local authorities issued decrees outlawing both the use of Low German schoolbooks and Low German as language of instruction (Sanders, 1982: 165).

This section has shown the relatively quick decline of Platt as official language during the 16th century. Through various, simultaneous economic, cultural, and religious developments Platt lost its status as the language of commerce, administration, religion, and education. The following centuries saw a continuously declining usage of Platt marked by its strictly unofficial character and its reduction to private domains like home, friends, and family. Along with it came the splintering of the written standard of the Hanseatic league into numerous local dialects.

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[50] Even today Northern Germany is predominately Lutheran, while the South remained largely Catholic.

[51] The printing house Lufft in Wittenberg reportedly sold over 100,000 copies of the *Lutherbibel* between 1534 and 1584, an enormous figure for that time.

[52] Platt was used in church even before the Reformation, and there existed Low German song books and even Bibles. See also Sanders (1982: 163).

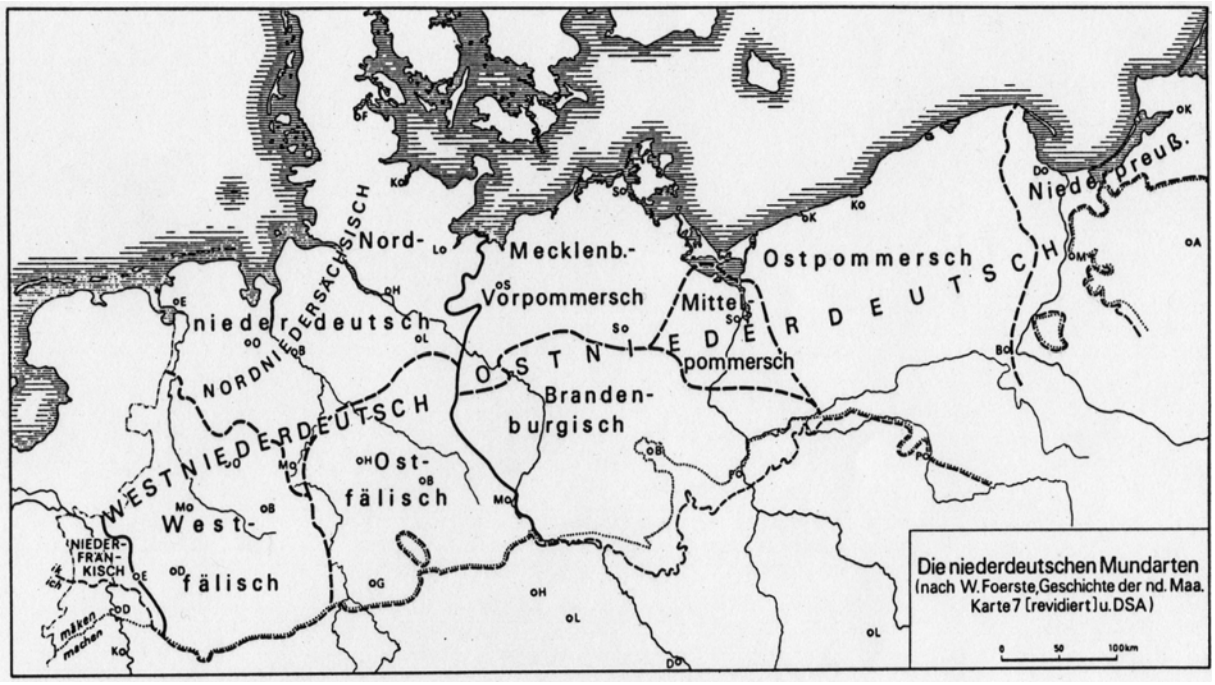
The next section will give a brief overview of the present day linguistic situation of Platt in northern Germany followed by a more detailed description of Grafschafter Platt, whose current sociolinguistic status is the topic in the remaining chapters.

2.10 Contemporary Platt in Northern Germany and the North-East Netherlands

Present-day Platt or *Neuniederdeutsch* is commonly divided into two major groups: West-Low German (*Westneuniederdeutsch*) spoken in the area of the former Saxon territories, and East-Low German (*Ostneuniederdeutsch*) which has existed since the 12/13th century as a result of massive German conquests east of the river Elbe on formerly Slavic territory (Sanders, 1982: 88-90). These two big groups can be further divided into sub-groups with *Westfälisch*, *Ostfälisch*, and *Nordniederdeutsch* being the main dialects of West-Low German, and *Mecklenburg-Vorpommersch*, and *Brandenburgisch* (or *Märkisch*) as the two major proponents of East-Low German.[53] Historically, Platt was also widely spoken east of the river Oder up to the present-day Baltic States. As a result of World War II, however, these areas along with their respective East-Low German dialects were lost.[54] The following map shows the boundaries of the contemporary Low German dialects in Germany:[55]

[53] For an introduction to New Low German, see Stellmacher (1990: chapter 5)
[54] The dialects in question are *Ostpommersch* and *Niederpreußisch* with *Mittelpommersch* still being spoken in parts of Brandenburg.
[55] Source: Stellmacher (1990: 218).

Map 2.1 The Contemporary Low German Dialects[56]



Although the present linguistic situation on Germany's eastern border is quite defined (Low German or High German in Germany, Polish in Poland), the same can not be said of Germany's western border with the Netherlands. In fact, the usage of Platt continues across the border into the eastern Netherlands. The Saxon dialects of the Netherlands encompass the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, and Gelderland in the north-east of the country.[57]

Due to the linguistic incoherence since Hanseatic days these principal regional dialects fall into numerous local dialects, often with the result that different forms of Platt

[56] Stellmacher (1990: 209).
[57] The dialect in the province of Groningen has a certain Frisian substrate, Frisian being officially a second language alongside Standard Dutch in Friesland, its western neighbor-province.

are spoken in places that are no more than 15 kilometers apart from each other. One major defining component, however, is the distinction of the common plural verb ending in *-t* or in *-en*. While most of the West-Low German dialects form this plural with *-t*, the newer East-Low German dialects use *-en* instead.[58] This paradigm is illustrated in table 2.12 by representing the respective endings of the verb *hebben* (to have) in West-Low German and East-Low German:

Table 2.12: The *en*/*t*-Ending Division of Common Plural Forms between West-Low German and East-Low German

West-Low German	East-Low German	Standard German	English
wi hebbt	wi hebben	wir haben	we have
ie hebbt	ie hebben	ihr habt	you have
se hebbt	se hebben	sie haben	they have

The different plural endings of table 2.12 show that the newer East-Low German dialects are considerably more influenced by High German than their older counterparts in the West with *Mecklenburg-Vorpommersch* (a member of the East-Low German group) being closest to the West-Low German dialects (Stellmacher, 1990: 129).

The number of contemporary Platt speakers in northern Germany is difficult to estimate. The last significant survey on this topic was carried out over twenty years ago in 1984 by the GETAS Institute in Bremen (Gesellschaft für angewandte Sozialpsychologie, "*Society for Applied Social Psychology*). This survey, sponsored by the German government, questioned 2,000 subjects over the age of eighteen in the old

[58] The exceptions here are the West-Low German dialects *Ostfriesisch* and *Schleswigsch*, which form their verb plural with *-en* but are nevertheless regarded as members of the West-Low German group (Sanders, 1982:74).

federal states of Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen, Bremen, Hamburg, and Nordrhein-Westfalen. The results of the GETAS study have been a subject of much debate and confusion. Part of the problem was the fact that the GETAS study relied on a self-evaluation of the subjects with regards to language competence rather than on language tests.[59] This resulted in often gross exaggerations of the actual number of people who speak Platt.[60] As Wirrer (1998) explains:

> In diesem Zusammenhang kursierten und kursieren in der Öffentlichkeit schier unglaubliche Zahlen. (1998: 310)[61]

According to the GETAS study ca. 35% of all subjects had a good command of the language in 1984. This number translates into ca. 4.55 million Platt speakers for the old federal states in 1984. If one assumes a similar linguistic situation in the East German states, then this number rises to approximately 6.0 million speakers.[62] The highest score of Platt speakers was found in northern Niedersachsen and in Schleswig-Holstein, and the lowest one in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Sociolinguistic surveys of this magnitude have - according to Stellmacher - a validity of about 10 years (Stellmacher, 1995: 28). This would mean that we may assume the same number – 6.0 million Platt speakers in northern Germany - up until 1994. The number of Platt speakers for the following decade until 2004 is unknown.

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[59] Chapter four of this work discusses the results and the methodology of the GETAS study in detail.
[60] See Wirrer (1998: 308-339).
[61] "With regard to this, sheer unbelievable numbers were and still are circulating among the public." -my translation.
[62] See Wirrer (1998: 308-339). The Institut für niederdeutsche Sprache in Bremen, for example, claims that there are presently 10 million Platt speakers. 13 July 2004 <http://www.ins.-bremen.de>

Of all the questions in the GETAS study none has given more cause for concern than question 26 which asked the subjects about the choice of language with their children. 82% stated that they never speak Platt with their children, which does not bode well for the future of the language.[63] As Wirrer points out:

> Die Tatsache, daß seit der GETAS-Umfrage bereits 14 Jahre vergangen sind, gibt darüber hinaus zu der Vermutung Anlaß, daß die Zahl der Kinder und Jugendlichen, die das Niederdeutsche - sei es als Erstsprache, sei es als Zweitsprache - […] erlernen, weiter gesunken ist. (Wirrer, 1998: 310)[64]

The linguistic situation of Platt in the Netherlands is quite different. A recent survey by the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (spring 2003) on the use of Twenter Platt (Twents) in the north-eastern Netherlands indicates a rather high percentage of people who speak Twents. According to the Groningen-survey Twents was spoken by 60% of all subjects. [65] In another, more regional survey from May 1999, the local newspaper TC/TUB (*Twentsche Courant Tubantia*) asked its readers about the usage of Twents. 75% of those who responded answered that they use it regularly, and 50% of the younger readers stated to use Twents on a day-to-day basis.[66] These numbers, however, do not conceal the fact that the use of Twents, too is decreasing. As Löwik points out:

> All this however does not alter the fact that the use of the regional language is clearly diminishing. (2003: 320)

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[63] The number of parents who never spoke Platt with children 14 and older was slightly less with 67%. See Wirrer (1998: 310).

[64] "The fact that already fourteen years have passed since the GETAS-survey raises the probability that the number of children and young adults who learn Low German - be it as first language or second language - has further decreasesd." - my translation.

[65] Source: Van-Deinse Instituut, 13 July 2004 <http://www.vandeinse.nl>

[66] Löwik (2003: 319).

Whatever the numbers of contemporary Platt speakers are, it needs to be pointed out, that in spite of the hundreds of local dialects, mutual comprehension between speakers of different Low German varieties - with the possible exception of *Ostfriesisch* due to its Frisian substrate - remains relatively easy.

This section discussed the current situation of Platt in northern Germany and the north-east Netherlands. I now turn to a detailed discussion of the Low German language surveyed in this work, Grafschafter Platt.

2.11 The Grafschaft Bentheim - a short History

The Grafschaft Bentheim is situated in the far north-west corner of *Niedersachsen* and borders in the west, south, and north on the Netherlands. It is commonly divided into a northern part, the *Niedergrafschaft* (Lower Grafschaft), and a southern part, the *Obergrafschaft* (Upper Grafschaft). In 2003 there were 132,497 inhabitants, with ca. 53,000 living in Nordhorn, the biggest city of the county and seat of administration. Agriculture still plays an important part in the Grafschaft Bentheim, especially in the Niedergrafschaft. Until the early 20th century the main economic artery was the river *Vechte* which runs from the north-east Netherlands through the Grafschaft into *Nordrhein-Westfalen*.

In 1050 the Grafschaft is mentioned for the first time in a document. The actual history of human settlement in this region, however, is much older. Archaeological findings of cups, axes, etc. date back to the third millenium B.C. The region later to become the Grafschaft Bentheim was located in Old Saxon territory (see 2.5.), but there

are no documents left from this time. The Frankish conquest of the Old Saxons brought with it the Christianization of the Saxons, and the introduction of a Frankish administration, that divided the lands into *Grafschaften* (literally: counties)[67]. The basic political units of the Saxons were the *Gaue*, and there is evidence that part of the Lower Grafschaft used to belong to the Saxon Gau of *Thuenti*[68], and part of the Upper Grafschaft to the Saxon *Gau* of either *Bursibant* or *Scopingun*.[69] Another product of Christianization was the clerical division into dioceses. The Lower Grafschaft was subject to the bishop of Utrecht (present-day Netherlands), while the Upper Grafschaft answered to the bishop of Münster.

By 1532, the Grafschaft had 5,400 inhabitants.[70] By that time, through various political developments, the *Graf* (count) already controlled almost all the lands of the present-day Grafschaft.[71] In the 13/14th century the Grafschaft became an important economic link for Hanseatic trade between Westfalian cities like Münster, and the Dutch cities of the Overijssel province. In 1544 the count, and with him most of his subjects, converted to the Lutheran faith. This conversion, however, lasted only a little longer than 40 years. Due to the Calvinistic movement in the neighboring Netherlands the Grafschaft became *reformiert* (Calvinistic or Dutch-Reformed Church) in 1588. To this day the *reformierte* and *altreformierte* denominations remain the predominant churches (over

[67] The Grafschaft itself was Christianized at a relatively early stage during the 8th century, possibly by Anglo-Saxon missionaries from across the Channel (Beuker, 2001: 2).
[68] Compare the present-day place name *Twente* in the north-eastern Netherlands.
[69] For more information on early settlement see Veddeler (1970, chapter 1-3).
[70] Beuker (2001: 2).
[71] For more information see Veddeler (1970, chapters 4 and 5).

50% of the population) in the Grafschaft.[72] In fact, the Grafschaft is one of the few regions in Germany where these denominations managed to establish themselves permanently.

In 1752/53 the count sold his lands to the kingdom of Hanover due to insolvency. The early 19th century saw the occupation of the Grafschaft by Napoleon's troops (1804 - 1813), and the establishment of the "Arrondissement Neuenhaus". In 1815, as a result of the *Wiener Kongress* (Congress of Vienna), the Grafschaft was returned to Hanover. In 1866, along with the kingdom of Hanover, the Grafschaft was added to the *Norddeutscher Bund* (North German Union), and in 1871, after the Franco-Prussian war, it was incorporated into Prussia. By 1888, 20,501 people lived in the Grafschaft Bentheim.[73]

During the Third Reich, the Grafschaft belonged to the *Weser-Ems Gau*. It is estimated that approximately 150 Jews were deported from the Grafschaft into concentration camps. After World War II, the Grafschaft was occupied by British and Canadian troops. An important social and linguistic factor was the stream of refugees from Germany's former Eastern regions into the west. A census from October 1946 concluded that the number of refugees in *Niedersachsen* alone amounted to ca. 1.5 million.[74] While in some regions in *Niedersachsen*, like *Wesermünde* or *Rotenburg*, the percentage of refugees was 50% and higher, this number was at first considerably lower

[72] The *altrefomierte* church (*gereformeerd* in Dutch) is an offshoot of the reformed church and has its roots in early 19th century Netherlands.
[73] Beuker (2001: 3).
[74] Kollai (1959: 20).

for the Grafschaft with under 10%.[75] However, new waves of refugees into the Grafschaft, many of them from former East Prussia, and the federal re-directing of the refugee treks led to an increase of refugees in the Grafschaft. The number of inhabitants during the Third Reich amounted to ca. 60,000. In the 1950's this number had risen to 90,000. The economic impact of this massive number of new arrivals was somewhat softened by the fact that many of them found work in the textile industries of Nordhorn, and in the factories of the oil industry in the Lower Grafschaft.[76]

One of the politically and socially most important post-war events in the Grafschaft was the *Gemeindereform* (land reform) of 1974, in which many smaller and until then independent places were incorporated into bigger towns or cities. Approximately during the same time (mid-sixties until early seventies) the school system in the Grafschaft was centralized which resulted in the abolishment of many rural schools (the so-called *Volksschulen*).

This section has shown the most important historical and social developments of the Grafschaft Bentheim, some of which had a direct impact on the distribution and usage

[75] Kollai (1959: 24).
[76] Natural gas was found there in 1943, and the oil industry has been an important economic factor until the 1980's.

of Grafschafter Platt to which we turn now.

2.12 Grafschafter Platt

Like all other varieties of Low German, Grafschafter Platt is characterized by the complete absence of the Second Sound Shift (see 2.4.3.2.) The Low German variety spoken in the Grafschaft belongs to West-Low German, and within this branch to the Westfalian group (see 2.10.). Although nowadays Grafschafter Platt seems rather homogeneous, it was traditionally divided into five principal groups until the 1950's[77]: Below I present a few selected linguistic features that illustrate the variation among the five groups:

1) The Community of Gildehaus

The Platt spoken in this south-eastern region of the Grafschaft Bentheim is marked by the so-called Westphalian breaking, i.e. the diphthongization of certain short vowels. Table 2.13 shows some examples of this phenomenon with the respective equivalents of the other four Grafschafter groups as contrast:

Table 2.13: Westphalian Breaking in Gildehaus

Gildehaus Platt	**Other groups**	**Modern Standard German**	**English**
liäpel	leppel	(der) Löffel	spoon
hiäge	hegge	(die) Hecke	hedge

[77] For more information see Rakers (1953: 199-230).

This feature, which is characteristic for the Low German dialects of Westphalia, originated with the diphthongization of Old Saxon short vowels in this area.[78] Other examples are:

Old Saxon *witan*	>	Westphalian *wieten* (to know)	(*/i/ > /ie/*)
Old Saxon *sumar*	>	Westphalian *suemer* (summer)	(*/u/ > /ue/)*
Old Saxon *opan*	>	Westphalian *oapen* (open*)*	(*/o/ > /oa/*)

Due to its proximity to Westphalia, the Gildehaus-groups is the only one in the Grafschaft Bentheim to feature this distinct characteristic.

2) The Upper Grafschaft (without Gildehaus, Wietmarschen, Engden, and Drievorden)

This group is characterized by the diminutive ending *-ken* whereas the other four groups employ the ending *-tien/ien* for diminutives. Some examples of this phenomenon are listed in table 2.14:

Table 2.14: The Dimunitive Ending *-ken* in the Upper Grafschaft (Obergrafschaft)

Upper Grafschaft	Other groups	Modern Standard German	English
leppelken	leppeltien	(das) Löffelchen	little spoon
pöttken	pöttien	[das Töpfchen][79]	Little pot
böampken	böampien	(das) Bäumchen	little tree
settken	settien	----	a little while

[78] For more information, see Stellmacher (1990: 110-111).
[79] The High German equivalent to the Low German word *pot* (Engl. pot) is *Topf* with the diminutive *Töpfchen*. Likewise, the High German word for the Low German expression *settien* or *settken* (Engl. a little while) is *Weile* with no diminutive.

Table 2.14 shows that the use of diminutives in Grafschafter Platt present quite a distinct feature, i.e. one can tell by a Platt speaker's diminutive endings, *–tien* or *–ken*, what part of the Grafschaft he or she comes from.

3) The City of Nordhorn

The Grafschafts' largest city (ca. 53,000 inhabitants) is characterized by its use of the diminutive ending *-ien/-tien*, although it is surrounded by communities who employ the *-ken*-dimunitive illustrated in table 2.14.

4) The Lower Grafschaft (Niedergrafschaft)

Communities in the lower Grafschaft (such as Emlichheim, Laar, and Hoogstede) are characterized by its use of long vowels as in *teegen* (against), and nasalized vowels as in *hound* (dog), or *kaunst* (you can).[80]

5) The Catholic communities of Wietmarschen, Engden, and Drievorden

This groups is characterized by the use of the diphthong *ai*, where the other groups employ a long *i* or *e*, as the examples in table 2.15 show:

[80] The nasalized vowels are more prominent in this group than in the other groups. The written form of these vowels has always been quite a problem. Heddendorp describes them in the following way: "Man hört einen Selbstlaut, der zwischen *a* und *o* liegt, fast wie im Französischen die Wörter *bon* und *long*, nur etwas nach *a* gefärbt.(1954:179) ("One hears a vowel that is in between *a* and *o*, almost like the French words *bon* and *long*, but pronounced more toward *a*.") – my translation.

Table 2.15: The Diphthong *ai* in the Wietmarschen-Group

Wietmarschen-Group	Other groups	Modern Standard German	English
tain	tien	zehn	ten
vair	veer	vier	four

This division into five major groups made it possible until a few decades ago to match a person to a specific area, even to a specific place by his/her version of Platt.[81] However, the social changes of the last decades, such as increased mobility, mass media in every household etc. led to the diminishing of these distinctions. [82]

Like most West-Low German dialects, Grafschafter Platt exhibits the common plural, the nasal loss, and the pronominal mergers of Old Saxon times (see 2.6), as well as the retention of the old Middle Low German monophthongs (see 2.8). A significant morphological characteristic of Grafschafter Platt is the absence of the aspectual marker *ge-*. This prefix, which had its origin in IE **kom* and was changed through a sound change to *ga* in Proto-Germanic, gradually got reinterpreted as a past-tense marker in OHG, Old Dutch, and MHG because of its completive aspectual force.[83] In fact, it is now one of the most common past participle prefixes in both High German and Standard

[81] For more information see Heddendorp (1954: 178-183).
[82] There are still some "shibboleths" such as Lower Grafschaft *proaten* (to speak) versus Upper Grafschaft *küren* (to speak); and the continuing use of the diminutives *-tien* versus *-ken*.
[83] The sound shift in question is called Verner's Law. Old English used to have this past participle marker, but it disappeared from the modern language with a gradual change from *ge* to *y/i* to zero.

Dutch.[84] However, in Platt and the North Germanic languages this aspect-marker/tense-marker function shift did not happen. Table 2.16 illustrates this phenomenon with examples from Platt, High German, and Standard Dutch:

Table 2.16: The Absence of the Aspectual/Past Particple Marker *ge* in Platt

Grafschafter Platt	**Modern Standard German**	**Modern Standard Dutch**	**English**
Ik heb de man seen	Ich habe den Mann gesehen	Ik heb de man gezien	I have seen the man
Heest du vraagt?	Hast du gefragt?	Heb je gevraagd?	Have you asked?

The absence of the *ge-* past participle marker is one of the most striking morphological features of Grafschafter Platt. It is also proof of the unique conservatism of this language since both Standard German and Standard Dutch, the two languages that influenced and continue to influence Platt the most, have adopted the *ge-* marker to form the past participle.

[84] Notable exceptions in Standard German are inseparable verbs like "Er hat es empfohlen" (*He recommended it*) from "empfehlen" (*to recommend*) and all verbs that end in *-ieren*, for example: "Sie hat studiert" (*She has studied/she studied*). In Dutch, verbs that end in *-eren* do add the *-ge* marker: "Zij heeft gestudeerd" (*She has studied/she studied*), from :"studeren" (*to study*).

Like High German, Platt employs three grammatical genders. These are: *dej/denn* (masculine; Standard German *der*), *de* (feminine; Standard German *die*), and *dat* (neuter; Standard German *das*).[85] Although gender in Platt normally corresponds to its respective counterpart in High German, there are quite a few cases where they do not match. Two notable exceptions are given in table 2.17:

Table 2.17: Gender Distribution in Platt

Grafschafter Platt	**Modern Standard German**	**English**
de toafel (feminine)	der Tisch (masculine)	the table
dat mäinsche (neuter)[86]	der Mensch (masculine)	the person/human being

These cases of different gender distribution show that the gender of the standard language cannot be indiscriminately transferred to Platt. Rather, Platt has its own gender distribution, which does not always parallel the High German pattern.

The last noticeable grammatical feature of Grafschafter Platt I mention here is the number of adjectives that end in *-mekaar*. This ending, which has its origin in Dutch *met elkaar* (literally: with each other), has been quite productive in Platt and is generally translated in Standard German with *-einander*.[87] Some examples of this feature are given in table 2.18:

[85] This makes Twents quite unique within the Dutch language area, since Standard Dutch only has two grammatical genders: *de* (masculine and feminine, or common gender), and *dat* (neuter).
[86] The noun *mäinsche* can also mean "woman", as in "*Dat mäinsche is seek*" (German: Die Frau ist krank, English: The woman is sick). See Sauvagerd (1975:90).
[87] Autorities on Grafschafter Platt estimated that there are no less than thirteen adjectives ending in *-mekaar*.

Table 2.18: The Ending *-mekaar* in Grafschafter Platt:

Grafschafter Platt	**German**	**English**
döörmekaar	durcheinander	messy/confused
metmekaar	miteinander	with each other
onnermekaar	untereinander	among each other
opmekaar	aufeinander	on top of each other

The adjectives in table 2.18 are insofar unique because none of the neighboring Low German dialects, e.g. *Münsterländisch* (the dialect in and around the city of Münster), show this feature. In fact, the adjective ending *-mekaar* is incomprehensible to Low German speakers from the neighboring region of Münster as well as to Low German speakers from *Ostfriesland*.

What makes Grafschafter Platt stand out among all other West Low-German varieties is the strong lexical influence of Dutch. The reason is not only the geographical proximity to the Netherlands, but rather the fact that for a long time Dutch was the official language of the Grafschaft. Beginning in the middle of the 17th century the Grafschaft started to recruit Dutch *onderwijzers* (teachers) for its schools. At the same time the influence of the Dutch *reformiert* Church began to grow very strong (see 2.11.1), so that by 1800 the language of high culture in the Grafschaft, i.e. the language of administration, church, and education, was entirely Dutch. The Dutch influence on the lexicon of Grafschafter Platt can be seen in table 2.19 with the respective equivalents of Mecklenburg Platt given as a contrast:

Table 2.19: The Lexical Influence of Dutch on Grafschafter Platt

Grafschafter Platt	**Modern Standard Dutch**	**Mecklenburg Platt**	**Modern Standard German**	**English**
krante	krant	tiding	Zeitung	newspaper
kaste	kast	schrank	Schrank	closet
mooij	mooi	schön	schön	nice/pretty
mistig	mistig	dakig	neblig	foggy
misschien	misschien	villicht	vielleicht	maybe
raam	raam	finster	Fenster	window
hook	hoek	eck	Ecke	corner
sönig	zuinig	sporsom	sparsam	thrifty
licham	lichaam	korper	Körper	body
potload	potlood	blistift	Bleistift	pencil

This thable, which is by far not complete, shows the lexical uniqueness of Grafschafter Platt in comparison to other varieties of Platt in northern Germany. It was not until the late 19th/early 20th century that Dutch was replaced by High German as language of instruction in Grafschafter schools. The *reformiert* and especially *altrefomiert* churches continued to use Dutch as official language long after the schools and administration had switched to High German, in some cases, like the *altrefomiert* church in Emlichheim, well into the 1970's.[88]

In addition to the lexical influence of Dutch, there are some Grafschafter words that I would describe as uniquely *Grafschafter* since they have no equivalents in either High German or Standard Dutch. Table 2.20 gives some examples:

[88] For more information see and Baumann (1965: 148-155).

Table 2.20: Unique Words in the Grafschafter Platt Lexicon

Grafschafter Platt	Modern Standard German	Modern Standard Dutch	English
kateker	Eichhörnchen	eekhoorn	squirrel
buks	Hose	broek	pants
grummelschuur	Gewitter	onweer	thunderstorm
miegäimpe	Ameise	mier	ant

This short list further highlights the rich vocabulary of Grafschafter Platt, and its special standing among other Low German varieties.

It is difficult to estimate the number of present-day Platt speakers in the Grafschaft. It is without doubt that Platt was spoken almost exclusively until the turn of the 19th century. As Küpers describes it:

> Als sicher darf angenommen werden, daß die überwältigende Mehrheit der Grafschafter Bevölkerung bis zur Jahrhundertwende sich des Plattdeutschen bediente. Das galt sowohl für die Land-als auch die Stadtbevölkerung ohne Ansehen des Standes. (1997: 289)[89]

Since the 1950's and 1960's, however, the use of Platt in the Grafschaft has greatly decreased. There is not one single factor or event that can be regarded as the sole cause of this trend. Rather, it is a number of often simultaneous developments, such as increased mobility, better education, the stream of refugees after W.W. II, the spread of (High German) mass media; but also internal reasons like centralized schools, and the incorporation of smaller places into bigger towns (see 2.11.1) that led to an ever-decreasing use of Platt in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

[89] "It is certain to assume that the overwhelming majority of the Grafschafter population used Low German until the turn of the century. This was true for both city and country dwellers regardless of their class." - my translation.

Toward the end of my research in the Grafschaft I asked five experts on Grafschafter Platt how many people, in their opinion, were still active Platt speakers in 2003, and how many people can still understand Platt in the Grafschaft Bentheim. The average for question one was 20-30%, and the average for question two 45-55%. In 1995, the European Union added Low German to its List of Endangered Languages in Europe.

2.13 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the history of Platt. Sections 2.1 to 2.4 illustrated how the Proto-Germanic language grew out of Indo-European and the subsequent developments of the various branches of Germanic (East Germanic, North Germanic, West Germanic) that grew out of Proto-Germanic. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 discussed the Old Saxon people and their language, Old Saxon, the ancestor of modern-day Low German. I also highlighted in section 2.6 some of the major phonological and grammatical differences between Old Saxon and Old High German, such as nasal loss (*Nasalschwund*), the common plural of verbs of Old Saxon, and its merger of the accusative and dative first and second person singular personal nouns. Section 2.7 provided a brief history of the Hanseatic League and its function(s) between the 14th and 16th century. Section 2.8 discussed Middle Low German, the language employed by the Hanseatic League. Similar to section 2.6, I showed some of the major phonological differences between Middle Low German and Middle High German (and/or Early New High German). In this section I also discussed the lexical influence that MHG had on MLG. Section 2.9 illustrated the decline of Middle Low German as a written and as an

official language, and the subsequent splintering into numerous different dialects. I showed that various reasons contributed to this decline, such as the economical demise of the Hanseatic League, a change of language loyalty among Low German speakers, the invention of the printing press, and Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into High German. Section 2.10 addressed the contemporary situation of Low German in northern Germany and the north-eastern Netherlands. In section 2.10 I also reviewed the results of several surveys that were conducted in the last decades both in Germany and the Netherlands (GETAS- Survey and Rijksuniversiteit Groningen Survey) about the use of Low German and its number of speakers. I showed that Low German continues to be in decline in both countries, although the results in the Netherlands indicated a slightly better situation both in terms of Low German use and the number of Low German speakers. Section 2.11 gave a short history of my research area, the Grafschaft Bentheim. I then illustrated several phonological and lexical features of Grafschafter Platt which make this form of Low German unique among all other dialects of this language. I concluded section 2.11 with a short discussion about the decreasing number of speakers of Grafschafter Platt during the last decades.

The present linguistic situation in the Grafschaft Bentheim, i.e. the concomitant use of Low German and High German within the same language community, is the topic of the following chapters. This phenomenon, known as *diglossia*, is one of the most important issues in sociolinguistics and has been researched widely since its inception by Ferguson in 1959. The following chapters of this work present a discussion and reevaluation of *diglossia* based on the results of my survey (2003) on Grafschafter Platt.

In chapter three I will introduce the concept of *diglossia* as well as a detailed discussion of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 3

DIGLOSSIA

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of diglossia, i.e. the use of two different varieties of a language in the same speech community. As Mackey (1993) points out, diglossia is a rather old phenomenon:

> The use of different languages [in one speech community] is of great antiquity. Even in pre-literate times, speech forms for myth and ritual were not the same as those used in everyday conversation. (Mackay, 1993: xiii).

The existence of Low German and High German in the Grafschaft Bentheim and their concomitant use, which has characterized the linguistic situation in the Grafschaft since the early 20th century, makes this region a diglossic speech community.[90] Both varieties of German are spoken and can be heard on a daily basis in the Grafschaft. While this chapter discusses the theory and pertinent literature of diglossia, the purpose of the following chapters is to discuss the nature of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim, i.e. how it fits into diglossic theory but also how it diverges from it. Indeed, chapters four and five will show that the diglossic situation in my research area is worth a closer look since it shows aspects and tendencies absent from most other diglossic speech communities. In fact, diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim is quite a unique phenomenon. However, before I discuss the results of my field study, it is necessary to talk in detail about the concept of diglossia, i.e. its history in linguistics and its present

[90] Low German was the predominant language in the Grafschaft until the late 19th century.

and past research. This chapter then gives both a broad and detailed overview of diglossic theory.

Section 3.1 discusses Ferguson's original formulation of diglossia (1959), and also highlights his nine diglossic rubrics including case studies that characterize diglossic speech communities. Section 3.2 discusses the extension of diglossia, i.e. alternative diglossic models, as well as refinements and modifications to Ferguson's original concept. In particular, this section discusses Fishman's extension (1967) of dilgossia and gives examples of his modifications. Section 3.3 discusses the impact of Fishman's extension on diglossic theory. It also shows four case studies where scholars of diglossia (MacKinnon, 1984; Fellmann, 1985; Pauwels, 1986; and Rindler-Schjerve and Vetter, 2003) have applied their interpretation of Fishman's extension to various speech communities around the globe. Section 3.3 concludes with a discussion on the critique of Fishman's diglossic model. Section 3.4 discusses the present state of research on diglossia and focuses in detail on Hudson's (2002) attempt to draw a contemporary theoretical outline of diglossia. This section also highlights the reception of Hudson's article among present-day scholars of diglossia and closes with Hudson's rebuttal. In section 3.5 I give an outline on the stability of diglossia, i.e. how long this phenomenon generally lasts and how stable it is. I also discuss in this section two diametrically opposed case studies of diglossic stability in the German-speaking areas of Europe (Switzerland and Germany). Chapter three concludes with a summary on diglossic theory (section 3.6).

3.1 Diglossia

The present linguistic situation of Platt can be explained by employing the concept of *diglossia*, a situation where two or more varieties of a language coexist in the same language community.[91] Ferguson first developed the term *diglossia* in 1959, and defines it as follows:

> Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, in the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (1959: 336)

Ferguson cites Swiss German in Switzerland, Modern Greek in Greece, Haitian Creole in Haiti, and varieties of Arabic in various Middle Eastern states as cases where diglossic speech communities exist. The field of diglossia has become one of the most important issues in sociolinguistics and has been expanded considerably since its introduction to the discipline. In fact, Hudson (2002: 1), and Kaye (2001: 121) point out that no "other sociolinguistic topic has generated such a prodigious research effort over the same forty-year span" (Kaye, 2001: 121). Before I discuss the various approaches and contributions to the field in sections 3.2 and 3.3, I will illustrate here Ferguson's original concept of diglossia by giving examples of the circumstances of his four case studies.

[91] It must be pointed out here that Ferguson specifically had in mind two *varieties* of a language spoken in the same speech community, for example Classical and Egyptian Arabic in Egypt, Haitian French and Standard Francin Haiti, Swiss German and Standard German in Switzerland, or Low German and High German in northern Germany.

According to Ferguson, the key element in diglossia is the coexistence of two languages throughout one speech community. One language is called the high variety (H) and the other one the low variety (L), with each variety having its own specialized functions. There are several features that set the H and L varieties apart from each other in diglossic speech communities. These features are: function, prestige, literary heritage, standardization, acquisition, stability, lexicon, grammar, and phonology. I will now show how H and L differ by discussing each feature within the parameters of Ferguson's original concept.[92]

3.1.1 Function

The functions of H and L, i.e. where, when, and with whom they are spoken, is, according to Ferguson, "one of the most important features of diglossia" (1996: 27). H is used for all formal occasions, on the job, and in most literature, while L is used in informal settings, such as conversations with friends, or within the family circle. Ferguson states that "the importance of using the right variety in the right situation can hardly be overestimated", i.e. speakers in diglossic speech communities who use H in an informal setting would become an object of ridicule. Likewise, a university lecture or a political speech held in L would traditionally be seen as equally inappropriate by the speech community. To give a concrete example, in the Arab world, as well as in Switzerland, a university lecture will be given in H (i.e. in Standard Arabic, Standard

[92] Ferguson's article originally appeared in *Word* 15: 325-340 (1959). In this chapter I use a reprint published in "Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Papers on Language in Society, 1959-1994" (ed. Huebner, 1996: 25-39).

German) but the ensuing, more informal discussion would be in L (e.g. Egyptian Arabic, Swiss German). Another example are newspaper articles written in H (e.g. Standard French), which might be read aloud by someone in H, and then be discussed in L (i.e. Creole French in Haiti). The functional distribution of H and L is an essential part of this work, and will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

3.1.2 Prestige

Speakers in diglossic speech communities commonly regard the H variety as superior to L. Ferguson submits that all speakers in diglossia share a belief that "H is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express thoughts" (Ferguson, 1996: 29). The belief in the superiority of H is sometimes so strong that the existence of L is denied. For instance, Ferguson reports that educated speakers of Haitian Creole will often insist that they always speak French, and not Creole. Educated speakers of Arabic, if asked for help by a non-speaker of Arabic who wants to learn the language, will normally use the H forms insisting that these are the only forms that exist. The question of prestige of H and the supposed inferiority of L also constitutes an essential aspect of this work and will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, where I show that almost all speakers of H (i.e. Standard German) in my study exhibit very positive attitudes toward L (i.e. Platt).

3.1.3 Literary Heritage

Ferguson reports that all four of his H languages (Standard French, Standard German, Standard or Classical Greek, and Standard or Classical Arabic) possess a considerable amount of literature held in high regard by the speech community. Literature in L is limited to folk literature or the occasional poem with very few published authors. The body of literature written in H often has a long tradition, and in the case of Greek can date back several thousand years. A good command of H in writing often produces appreciation and admiration among the readers. For example, a writer's use of, say, a particularly complicated or obscure word from twelfth-century Arabic will cause the readers to think that "so-and-so really knows his Arabic" (Ferguson: 1996: 30). A feature that is closely related to literary heritage is standardization, to which we turn now.

3.1.4 Standardization[93]

Not surprisingly, all of Ferguson's H languages are highly standardized with dictionaries, rules for pronunciation, a common orthography, officially acknowledged grammars, and guidelines for style and expression. Quite often the H languages are governed by a central language institution, such as the *Academie Française*. The L variety, on the other hand, might not even have a common, unified orthography, a factor that Ferguson addresses in his article by pointing out the various spelling systems of the

[93] The question of what precisely constitutes a standard language has been the object of much discussion in linguistics. . For more information, see Haas (1982), and Fishman & Cobarrubias (1983). For information on Standard English, see Crowley (1989).

L varieties (1996: 26-27). As Ferguson points out, descriptive or normative studies of the L variety are often non-existent or carried out by scholars from outside the speech community and are written in a different language. The literary status of H and L in my target area will be discussed in some more detail in chapter 6.

3.1.5 Acquisition

The question of language acquisition is another important feature of diglossia. L is the first language of everyone and "is learned by children in what may be regarded as the 'normal' way of learning one's mother tongue" (Ferguson, 1996: 30). Ferguson points out that the command of H is often incomplete in diglossia, while "the speaker is at home in L to a degree he almost never achieves in H" (1996: 30). The H variety is often only learned in a formal school setting by means of grammatical concepts and rules that are absent in the acquisition of L. To give a concrete example, children in Switzerland usually first acquire Swiss German at home as mother tongue and only later learn Standard German in schools. According to Ferguson, in his four defining case studies all adults use L in speaking to their children. This important point of language choice with children will be addressed throughout this work with a special emphasis in chapter 6, which examines the use and command of Platt among German teenagers.

3.1.6 Stability

Although the coexistence of two language varieties in one speech community might be considered a tense and unstable situation, Ferguson states that diglossia

normally exists over "at least several centuries" and sometimes "well over a thousand years" (1996: 31). For example, Swiss German diglossia has been existing for centuries, while "Arabic diglossia seems to reach as far back as our knowledge of Arabic goes" (1996: 26). Furthermore, diglossia is not limited to any geographic region, or to any language family as can be seen by Ferguson's four different case studies. If, however, there is to be change within the distribution of H and L in the language community, which can be caused by more widespread literacy, or broader communication among different social segments, then the resulting language shift is in favor of L. In other words, if the stability of diglossia is shaken, then the equilibrium between H and L will be affected in such a way that either L or a mixed variety of L and H becomes standard. According to Ferguson, H can only succeed in becoming the standard language if "it is already serving as a standard language in some other community and the diglossic community, for reasons linguistic and non-linguistic, tends to merge with the other community" (1996: 37). If this does not happen, however, then H "fades away and becomes a learned or liturgical language studied only by scholars or specialists and not used actively in the community" (1996: 37). As an example, Ferguson cites the development of Latin in early medieval Europe where it served as high language but then gave way to the several Romance vernaculars, and eventually ceased to be spoken altogether. The stability of diglossia in my target area will be discussed in more detail at the end of chapter 3 and also in chapter 4.

3.1.7 Grammar

Although H and L are forms of the same language, the grammar of the H variety is usually regarded as more complex than the L variety. According to Ferguson, H often exhibits grammatical categories not present in L. For example, French nouns have both a masculine/feminine gender and a singular/plural distinction while Haitian Creole nouns have neither. Standard German has four cases, while Swiss German only has three. Ferguson notes that "there are always extensive differences between the grammatical structures of H and L" (1996: 32) which can be observed in every diglossic speech community. Ferguson admits that "it is always risky to hazard generalizations about grammatical complexity" (1996: 32). However, Ferguson argues that if certain criteria are met - such as L having fewer case distinctions (as in Swiss German), all prepositions in L taking the same case ending rather than different cases, L having no gender distinctions in the pronoun (as is the case in Egyptian Arabic) - than the conclusion is that "the grammatical structure of any given L-variety is simpler than that of its corresponding H" (1996: 32). With regard to his own four case studies, Ferguson found his conclusion confirmed for Arabic, Greek and Haitian Creole, but not entirely for Swiss German due to the "extensive morphophonemics of Swiss" (Ferguson, 1996: 32).

This shows that L does not always have to have a simpler grammar than H, a point later commented on by Fasold (1987) who attributes the grammatical simplicity of L to initial impression:

> In short, based on an intuitive notion of 'simplicity' in grammar, the grammar of L is simpler than the grammar of H (1987: 37).

3.1.8 Lexicon

Due to their relatedness, the vocabulary of H and L is mostly shared, although with variations and "with differences of use and meaning" (Ferguson, 1996: 33). Not surprisingly, any kind of technical word, like "nuclear fission", is to be found in the H lexicon, while the L lexicon often contains words for "homely objects" (1996: 33) such as cooking utensils or farming equipment that are absent from the H lexicon. One remarkable, lexical consequence of diglossia is the existence of doublets, i.e. one word in H, and word in L for the same concept. For example, in Greek the H word for 'wine' is *inos*, while the L word is *krasî*. Greek restaurants will have the word *inos* written on menus, but the patron would ask for *krasî*. Ferguson suggests that the nearest American parallel to this phenomenon are pairs such as *illumination* and *light*, or *children* and *kids*, although he admits that both choices are perfectly appropriate in oral and written speech. In contrast, however, in diglossic speech communities "the use of one or the other [H or L word] immediately stamps the utterance or written sequence as H or L" (1996: 33).
Finally, closely related to the lexical feature is Ferguson's last rubric of diglossia - phonology - to which we turn now.

3.1.9 Phonology

The phonologies of H and L can be quite close or they can differ considerably, depending on the language community. While the H and L varieties in Greek diglossia are noticeably similar, the H and L varieties in Swiss diglossia are marked by considerable phonological derivations. For this reason, Ferguson does not give any

general definition of the phonological feature in diglossia but concludes that "the sound systems of H and L constitute a single phonological structure of which the L phonology is the basic system and the divergent features of H phonology are either a subsystem or a parasystem" (1996: 34). In summary then, similarly to the lexical feature, H and L share the same basic phonology due to their linguistic relatedness. One form may have ways of combining sounds that the other does not, for example French has a high front rounded vowel /ü/ which is absent from Haitian Creole. However, in general the phonological differences between H and L are not big enough to warrant the existence of two different phonological systems in diglossia.

3.1.10 Tabular Summary of Ferguson's nine Rubrics of Diglossia

The following table, taken from Britto's discussion of diglossic theory, summarizes the nine features (also called rubrics) of Ferguson's original treatise.

Table 3.1: The Nine Rubrics of Diglossia[94]

Rubrics	Characteristics of H:	Characteristics of L:
Function:	Used for formal speeches, writing, and high functions.	Used for conversations and low functions.
Prestige:	More prestigious.	Less prestigious.
Acquisition:	Learned formally at school, in addition to L.	Acquired naturally and informally at home or playground.
Standardization:	Highly standardized by descriptive and normative studies.	Poorly standardized, though informal standards may exist.
Literary heritage:	Vast amount. Highly esteemed literature.	Small amount. Less highly esteemed literature.
Stability:	Autonomous and stable, with some interference from L.	Autonomous and stable, with some interference from H.
Lexicon:	The bulk of the vocabulary is shared with L. But there are also words used exclusively or paired with L.	The bulk of the vocabulary is shared with H. But there are also words used exclusively or paired with H.
Phonology:	With L constitutes a single phonological structure. Features divergent from L are a substyem.	With H constitutes a single phonological structure. L, however is the basic system.
Grammar:	More complex.	Simpler.

In this section I have discussed Ferguson's original concept of diglossia and have given examples of all nine diglossic features. In the following section I will examine several contributions to the field of diglossia that have broadened Ferguson's original definition.

[94] Britto (1986: 58).

3.2 The Extension of Diglossia

Ferguson regarded his study as "preliminary" (1996: 26), and concluded his paper with an "appeal for further study of this phenomenon and related ones" (1996: 38). Scholars have indeed heeded his appeal for further research for the field of diglossia has grown immensely. A bibliography of diglossia published by Fernándenz in 1993 lists more than 3,000 entries. In this section I will discuss mainly Fishman's (1967) extension of Ferguson's original treatise and then examine the impact of Fishman's contribution on diglossic theory.

3.2.1 Fishman's Extension (1967)

As Britto (1986) points out, between 1959 and 1967, the amount of research in this field remained relatively small. In fact, in the years following Ferguson's article diglossia seemed to be more or less synonymous with bilingualism. For example, in his work on the functional distribution of Creole and French in Haiti, Steward (1962) concluded:

> Eventually, if the term 'diglossia' is not to degenerate into just a somewhat fancy synonym for bilingualism, it will be necessary for linguists to formalize a little more definitely the ways in which diglossia differs from other kinds of bilingualism (1962: 159).

Stewart's call for a more precise definition about the difference between diglossia and bilingualism, in a way, foreshadows Kloss' and Fishman's contributions to the field (1966, 1967). The main feature of Kloss' and Fishman's approach is the question of the structural relatedness between H and L, which is not a diglossic criterion per se but rather, according to Ferguson, a prerequisite for the existence of diglossia. Recall that

Ferguson defines diglossia as speech communities where "two or more varieties of *the same language* are used" (1996: 25; my Italics). He also explicitly exempts bilingual communities from being diglossic: "No attempt is made in this paper to examine the analogous situation where two (related or unrelated) languages are used side by side throughout a speech community" (1996: 25-26).

Based on Ferguson's work, Kloss (1966) introduces the terms *in-diglossia* and *out-diglossia* in an attempt to characterize and categorize multilingual communities. The former defines speech communities where two related languages are spoken as H and L, for example French and Creole in Haiti. Kloss' term in-diglossia is thus identical to diglossia in Ferguson's sense. Out-diglossia, however, refers to speech communities where two unrelated languages are used as H and L. Kloss states Spanish and Guaraní, an indigenous language, in Paraguay as examples and defines out-diglossia as follows: "monolingual nations when viewed from the standpoint of "mothertongueness" but bilingual in terms of cultural setting and equipment" (1966: 138).

The term 'out-diglossia', i.e. structurally unrelated languages serving as H and L such as Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay, was extended by Fishman in 1967. Fishman argues that diglossia should be extended to societies "which are multilingual in the sense that they employ separate dialects, registers, or functionally differentiated language varieties of whatever kind" (1967: 30). Fishman then proposes a four-fold model for speech communities that significantly extends Ferguson's approach by including both bilingual communities and structurally unrelated languages. The following sections give a short overview of Fishman's 1967 model.

3.2.1.1 Both Diglossia and Bilingualism

This situation refers to a speech community where every member is fluent in both H and L. Like Ferguson (1959), Fishman (1967) cites Switzerland as an example. However, like Kloss (1966) Fishman also mentions Paraguay as a model, where almost the entire nation speaks Spanish and the indigenous language Guaraní. According to Fishman, the former monolingual rural population of Paraguay added Spanish to the speech community for matters of education, government, religion etc, while the city dwellers retained Guaraní for traditional L domains such as family and friends. This part of Fishman's model then is identical to Kloss' terms 'in-diglossia' and 'out-diglossia'. Fishman's model continues with an extension of 'out-diglossia' and will be discussed in the following section.

3.2.1.2 Diglossia without Bilingualism

This situation occurs when two socio-economically or culturally disjunctive groups live in the same area/nation or economic entity. The ruling group uses H, while the lower classes use L exclusively. As an example, Fishman cites czarist Russia before W.W.I where the nobles spoke French only among each other, while the masses used one or the other form of Russian. Fishman points out that H and L speakers "did not form a single speech community" (1967:33), and they often needed translators for their inter-communication. Because of the social gap between the elites and the masses bilingualism did not develop.

Although a situation such as this is rather rare nowadays, Fishman points out that the "language problems of Wales, Canada, and Belgium stem from origins such as these" (1967:34).[95] 'Out-diglossia' in this sense is defined as the existence of two unrelated languages in *two* speech communities that live in the same area.

3.2.1.3 Bilingualism without Diglossia

Bilingualism without diglossia occurs in societies in which the domains of H and L have largely merged, i.e. either language may be used for any purpose. As Fasold points out in his discussion of Fishman's approach "bilingualism without diglossia is the result when diglossia 'leaks' "(1987: 41). This type of non-diglossia is, according to Fishman, often the result of "rapid social change, of great social unrest" (1967: 34). Industrialization in the Western world as well as in Africa and Asia often caused a merger of H and L. Initially situations like this start out as diglossia with bilingualism. For instance, H was originally the language of the speech community segment that provided the means (capital and organization), while L was spoken by the segment that provided the manpower. Over time, however, some speakers of L abandoned their native language in favor of the more privileged H, while other speakers of L reacted by creating "an elaborated version of their own largely pre-industrial, pre-urban, pre-mobilization tongue" (1967: 35). The outcome of this imbalance is that H and L are both used for

[95] These three countries (or provinces in the case of Wales) all have seen major social unrest up to the point of demanding separation (the province of Quebec from Canada), based on cultural and language problems with the countries' H-speaking government/ administration. For more information on Wales, see Jenkins & Williams (2000); for information on the Belgian situation, see Kern (1997: 63-103); for information on Quebec, see Larrivee (2003).

intragroup communication "in seemingly random fashion" (1967: 35). Fishman points out that this phenomenon is also often the result of dislocated immigrants and their children. According to Fishman, bilingualism without diglossia is a transient phenomenon with the fusion of H and L eventually leading to a new mother tongue. Fishman mentions no specific examples of "Bilingualism without Diglossia", but points out that this type of diglossia can often be observed "in those parts of Africa and Asia which have experienced industrialization under Western auspices" (1967: 34).

3.2.1.4 Neither Diglossia nor Bilingualism

Finally, Fishman discusses speech communities that are characterized by neither diglossia nor bilingualism, i.e. a completely monolinguistic society with only one linguistic variety which is used by all members of the speech community and for all purposes. Fishman himself admits that "such groups - be they bands or clans - are easier to hypothesize than to find" (1967: 36) since all communities seem to have at least some stylistic differences in their repertoire. Fishman's four types of diglossia (or non-diglossia) can be summarized by the following quadrant:

3.2.1.5 Tabular Summary of Fishman's Extension

Table 3.2: Fishman's Extension of Diglossia (1967)

Type1: ***Both Diglossia and Bilingualism***	**Type2:** ***Diglossia without Bilingualism***
Description: Every member of the speech community is fluent in both H and L.[96]	Description: H and L speakers are two disjunctive groups living in the same area.
Examples: German and Swiss German in Switzerland, Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay.	Example: Czarist Russia before W.W. I (Nobility speaks French, masses speak Russian).
Type3: ***Bilingualism without Diglossia***	**Type4:** ***Neither Diglossia nor Bilingualism***
Description: H and L have merged; either language may be used for any purpose.	Description: Completely monolinguistic societies with no varieties.
Examples: Industrialized countries in the Western world, "westernized" African and Asian countries.	Examples: Isolated tribes, bands, or clans (hypothetical).

3.3 The Impact of Fishman's Extension (1967) on Diglossic Theory

Fishman's inclusion of genetically unrelated languages functioning as H and L in diglossia widened the field considerably. In this section I discuss firstly why the structural relatedness between H and L is such a critical factor in diglossic theory, then I give some examples of case studies where Fishman's model was applied, and finally I discuss several critiques of Fishman's treatment of diglossia.

3.3.1 The Question of Structural Relatedness between H and L in Diglossia

As Hudson (1991) points out, the extension of diglossia to two unrelated languages raises the question whether the functional complementation between H and L in such a situation is stable or competitive (1991: 10). According to Hudson, if two structurally related languages coexist within the same speech community, then the functional distribution between them may be stable, as in the case of Swiss German and High German in Switzerland, or it may be competitive, as in the case of Frisian and Dutch in the northern Netherlands, where both languages are sometimes in competition for the same domain (1991: 10).[97] Stable or unstable functional distribution can also be found in language communities where two unrelated languages coexist, e.g. the relatively stable functional compartmentalization of Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay, or the "serious rivalry between immigrant-host and colonial-indigenous contacts worldwide" (Hudson, 1991: 10). However, Hudson points to the fact that statistically the functional distribution between two unrelated languages used in the same speech community is highly unstable:

[97] The Frisian Language, a member of the West Germanic language group, enjoys official status in the province of Friesland and is used alongside Dutch in schools and the local parliament. For information, see McArthur (1992: 421-422), and Zondag (1984: 339-349).

> Whereas codes which are structurally related to each other are as likely to be in stable complementation as to be in competition for control of the same situational contexts, codes which are not structurally related are overwhelmingly more likely […] to be in conflict when used by a single speech community for within-group communication. (1991: 10)

According to Hudson, the outcome of such a process is often that H will displace L in the long run. An example for such a language shift are speech communities in eastern Wallonia (the French-speaking part of modern-day Belgium). Verdoodt (1972) reports that both German and French (who are genetically unrelated) were used for almost any purpose in this area with German functioning as L and French functioning as H, but neither language was compartmentalized to a specific niche. Over the last decades, however, German has been massively receding in favor of French (1972: 382-85).[98]

Ferguson discussed the question of structural relatedness in an article published in 1991. He admits that in his original formulation he failed to "make clear how far apart (or how close together) the high and low varieties have to be in a language situation to be characterized as diglossia" (1991: 223). However, similar to Hudson, he dismisses cases of unrelated languages coexisting within the same speech community as non-diglossic because they would produce different results:

[98] Post-war hostility toward Germany was one of the main reasons for the decline of German in this area. For more information on the language situation in Belgium, see Donaldson (1983: 20-36).

> My feeling was that if you have two varieties in this H-L relationship that are fairly closely related to one another, one kind of outcome will result (e.g. certain kinds of lexical borrowings will take place, certain forms of phonological and syntactic convergence will be likely, and so forth). However, if the H and L varieties are unrelated languages, then the outcomes will ultimately be quite different; different kinds of borrowing will take place and different types of intermediate forms will result, and the overall history of the language situation will be different. (1991: 223)

Notwithstanding this defense of his original 1959 approach, Ferguson concludes that "the need remains for developing scales of distance in language structure" (1991: 224).

In this section I discussed the relevance of the structural relatedness between H and L. I showed why Fishman's extension, i.e. the inclusion of structurally unrelated languages to the field of diglossia, is considered controversial by scholars such as Hudson and Ferguson. The next section gives some examples of case studies where Fishman's approach was applied.

3.3.2 Fishman's Model in Practice - Four Case Studies

As mentioned above, the extension of diglossia to speech communities where unrelated languages coexist, resulted in a massive body of case studies. The sheer amount on diglossia-related studies would not have been possible previously, i.e. before Fishman's 1967 model of diglossia. Often, these studies extended Fishman's treatment of diglossia even further. A case in point is MacKinnon's 1984 study of bilingual speech communities in modern-day Scotland that use both Gaelic and English (one Celtic and one Germanic language). MacKinnon points out that these speech communities would fall into Fishman's first quadrant "Both Diglossia and Bilingualism" because they

represent "two distinct languages used by all speech community members" (1984: 499). However, MacKinnon states that Fishman's approach is too "static" (1984: 499) and goes on to introduce a complex three-dimensional model of diglossia that includes categories such as *schizoglossia*, a situation "in which distinctive language-variants are conserved by different social groups or strata" (1984: 503). According to MacKinnon this category can be further divided into *Multi-Ethnic Colonial/Imperial Cases* (1984: 503) where two or more unrelated languages are used by different groups of the speech community (e.g. former European colonies in Africa), and *Developed Industrial Class Societies*, such as Great Britain, which are characterized by societal multidialectism according to social class.[99] MacKinnon's interpretation of diglossia, or rather of Fishman's extension, is quite unique. His study shows how diglossic communities do not just fall into one or the other category, but rather are part of a complex, interwoven system with interdependent and dynamic components.

In his 1985 discussion of the sociolinguistic situation of Hamito-Semitic languages, Fellman points out that a situation of two unrelated languages functioning as H and L does not have to be restricted to the present. According to Fellman, Maltese, an Arabic language, and Italian were used as low and high languages respectively during medieval times on the island of Malta before giving way to English as official language

[99] For more information see MacKinnon (1984: 491 - 510).

during the nineteenth century:[100]

> Throughout the medieval period and well into modern times Maltese existed in a diglossic relation with Italian, Maltese serving as the "low" language of everyday life, and Italian serving as the "high" language of Church and State. (1985: 221)

Fellman's description of the former linguistic situation of Malta represents a significant junction in the interpretability of Fishman's first quadrant "Both Diglossia and Bilingualism". By defining the former Maltese speech community as diglossic, Fellman creates an example of diglossia where H and L are not only structurally unrelated, but also belong to unrelated language families (Semitic and Indo-European).

Based on Fishman's third quadrant "Bilingualism without Diglossia" Pauwels took the multi-interpretability of Fishman's approach even further in her 1986 discussion of Limburgs (a variety of Dutch) and Swabian (a variety of German) serving as L-varieties for Dutch and German immigrants in Australia. Pauwels' field study on the Limburgs/English language contact in the southeast corner of Australia and Swabian/English contact in the southwestern part of Australia deals with diglossic relations between two related yet mutually incomprehensible languages/dialects that are caused by a new language environment.

According to Fishman, the transitional nature of immigrant/host language contacts usually results in monolingualism in favor of the host language after two or three generations. Pauwels confirms this phenomenon but adds that some immigrant groups

[100] The Maltese language came into existence during the Arab conquest and domination of Malta (870 - 1090). It is nowadays defined as "a variety of Arabic with elements of several other Mediterranean languages" (McArthur, 1992: 641), and is the only Semitic language written in the Roman alphabet and used for official purposes in Europe.

yield their native language to the host language more readily than others do. Pauwels points out that both groups of settlers (two hundred post-1945 immigrants) migrated from diglossic speech communities in *Limburg* (the Netherlands) and *Würtemberg* (Germany) where Standard Dutch and Standard German were used as high languages respectively. In her study Pauwels discovered that both speech communities retained the high/low language distinction in their new host country. However, the Dutch immigrants had replaced Standard Dutch with English as high language, whereas the Germans preserved Standard German as high language (with English making strong inroads as both high and low language within the Swabian community). Pauwels' interpretation of Fishman's extension is insofar remarkable, in that she takes the H- and L-varieties out of their native-country context (Germany and the Netherlands), and observes their respective developments in a new, foreign host-country (Australia) which has a structurally unrelated H-language (English).

Finally, based on Fishman's second quadrant "Diglossia without Bilinugalism" Rindler- Schjerve and Vetter (2003) suggest a model of diglossia that incorporates several national languages coexisting in the same community. As an example of such a state Rindler-Schjerve and Vetter mention nineteenth century Galicia (present-day Poland) during the Hapsburg Empire with German, Italian, and Polish (a West-Slavic language) functioning - in various degrees - as high languages, while Slovenian (a South-Slavic language), and Ukrainian (an East-Slavic language) were employed as low languages (Rindler-Schjerve, 2003: 47). This approach is clearly an example of MacKinnon's *Multi-Ethnic Colonial/Imperial Case* of diglossia where translators had to

be employed for inter-group communication. Rindler-Schjerve and Vetter's study is noteworthy, since it represents a case of a speech community, where unrelated H- and L-varieties were assigned top-down by a powerful empirical administration instead of being the outcome of more natural causes (e.g. the emergence of H as a liturgical language, as was the case with Latin in the Middle Ages, and Standard German in Switzerland in the 16/17th century).

In this section I presented four case studies based on Fishman's approach of including structurally unrelated languages into diglossic theory. I have shown how three of Fishman's quadrants "Both Diglossia and Bilingualism", "Bilingualism without Diglossia", and "Diglossia without Bilingualism" can be used to describe the language situations in different parts of the world in the past and in the present. The next section will discuss several points of critique of Fishman's approach.

3.3.3 Critique of Fishman's Model

Although Fishman's extension opened the field of diglossia considerably, it did not remain without critique. In this section I discuss Timm's (1981) and Britto's (1986) critiques of Fishman's 1967 model as well as modifications both scholars have offered to Ferguson's original approach in order to better define diglossic speech communities.

3.3.3.1 Timm's (1981) Critique of Fishman's Model

Timm (1981) offers several points of critique with regard to Fishman's model. One of her main foci is Fishman's over-emphasis on the "domain complementarity" (i.e. the functional distribution) of H and L for defining diglossic speech communities. According to Timm, Fishman neglects in his approach most of Ferguson's original nine rubrics in favor of the functional distribution of H and L (Ferguson's first rubric):

> Of the nine original criteria for defining diglossia, Fishman focuses on just one: role or domain complementarity of the two languages. This is the only feature which appears throughout the diglossic situations discussed by Fishman. (1981: 362)

As Timm points out, if language communities with two unrelated languages acting as H and L are defined as diglossic, then some of the original diglossic criteria, such as the shared lexical and phonological systems of H and L (Ferguson's rubrics eight and nine), become irrelevant. The supposed simplicity of L's grammar if compared to H's grammatical structures (rubric seven in Ferguson' original) is also rendered moot in Fishman's model, if one considers the grammatical complexities of, say, Russian which, according to Fishman, served as the low language during 19th century Czarist Russia (see 3.3.1.1. "Diglossia without Bilingualism"). As Timm comments:

> In reviewing Fishman's treatment of diglossia, it can be seen that most of the original criteria diagnostic of diglossia have become otiose: features such as the largely shared lexical and phonological inventories of H and L and the relatively greater simplicity of L grammatical structures compared with their respective H varieties are hardly relevant across language boundaries. (1981: 362)

Furthermore, if the function of Russian is really to be considered as a low language during 19th century Czarist Russia, then diglossic features such as literary tradition (Ferguson's rubric number three) may equally well characterize the L variety instead of only the H variety; a point which Timm summarizes as follows:[101]

> Literary tradition, prestige, and standardization, all features previously linked with the H variety, may [in Fishman's model] characterize the L language as well. (1981: 362)

In her critique of Fishman's model Timm also addresses the question of rigid compartmentalization between H and L in general, and concludes that "the two-way distinction between H and L languages is too restrictive [in multilingual speech communities], because there are situations in which one or more languages (or varieties) are deployed for domains that lie somewhere between the H and L levels" (1981: 364). This point is important because other researchers such Denison (1971) and Platt (1977) also comment on this phenomenon. In his work on the linguistic situation in Sauris (German: *die Zahre*), a German speaking linguistic island in north-east Italy in the Carnian Alps, Denison (1971) found out that its speakers employ a three-way language model for communication: Italian as High variety, German as Low variety, and

[101] This point is particularly striking if one considers 19th century Russian authors such as Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy whose works had an enormous impact on contemporary European authors in Germany and France. For more information see Frenzel + Frenzel (1979: 459-465).

Friulian[102] occupying a middle ground between the two languages. According to Denison, the functions of Friulian, e.g. for greetings and farewells, are such that it can be described as a Mid variety, i.e. it is neither associated with the formal functions of H nor with completely informal L-functions:

> Indeed, for Saurians, Friulian possesses the degree of integrity that goes with a modest dignity - less than they associate with Italian, but far more than they see in the German dialect. (Denison, 1971: 170)

Similarly to Denison, Platt (1977) points out in his work on multilingualism in Singapore and Malaysia that the use of a Medium variety is not entirely unusual. In fact, Platt concludes that these countries constitute examples of polyglossia, "which may involve the use of […] more than one H variety, one or more Medium varieties, one and more L varieties and a possible L- variety"[103] (Platt, 1977, 367). For example, the English educated Chinese population of Singapore has the choice between various H, M, and L varieties. According to Platt, both Formal Singapore English and Mandarin function as H languages, Hokkien (a Chinese dialect) functions as M language, while other Chinese dialects are used for the L variety, and Bazaar Malay as the L-variety.

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[102] Friulian belongs to the language group of Romansch, or Rhaeto-Romance (a member of the Romance language family), spoken in south-eastern Switzerland and north-eastern Italy. This group includes Ladin spoken in the Dolomites, and Friulian, spoken north of Venice. According to Stevenson, both "Ladin and Friulian are under serious threat of extinction from Italian" (1999:102). For more information, see Stevenson (1999: 102-103).

[103] The L-variety (read: L minus) that Platt refers to here is Bazaar Malay or Bahasa Pasar, a "pidginized form of Malay with drastically reduced lexicon and highly simplified morpho-syntax" (Platt, 1977: 363). According to Platt, the use of this L- variety is restricted to informal commercial transactions only, e.g. at the market.

Although there exists no Medium variety in the *Grafschaft Bentheim* or in German speaking countries in general, the latest research in Germanic sociolinguistics is considering more and more the possibility that the so-called *Umgangsprache* (colloquial speech) is fulfilling the function of a Medium between H and L. Waterman defines the term as follows:

> That form of the language [German] which is characterized in speech by a pronunciation and vocabulary containing local and regional elements is referred to as the *Umgangssprache*, though the term is not absolute. There is no precise dividing line separating either *Hochsprache* [the H variety] from *Umgangssprache*, or *Umgangssprache* from *Mundart* [dialect, i.e. the L variety]; the one merges almost imperceptibly into the other. (1991: 185)

Sanders, too, points out in his discussion of colloquial speech in northern Germany that the *Umgangssprache* forms a *Zwischenbereich* (border area) between Standard German and the numerous varieties of Platt in this region (1982, 194).[104]

With regards to the two-way functional distribution model critiqued by Timm, the data from my research suggest that the rigid distribution of domains that Ferguson and Fishman propose is by far not as compartmentalized as previously thought. Chapter four shows that the functional distribution between Platt and Standard German is rather interwoven than neatly divided into niches with the L variety cutting into functions of H and vice-versa.

[104] The research on German *Umgangssprache*, although not part of this work, has grown considerably over the last decades. For more information, see Sanders (1982, 193-200), Waterman (1991, 185-187), von Polenz (1999, 338-473), and Eichhoff-Cyrus and Hoberg (2000).

3.3.3.2 Britto's (1986) Critique of Fishman's Model

Similar to Timm's critique, Britto criticizes the fact that Fishman's model of diglossia "has loosened Ferguson's conditions relating to the structure of the diglossic codes [i.e. the structural relatedness between H and L]" (1986: 42). According to Britto this has resulted in a situation where the concept of diglossia can practically be applied to any two-language situation:

> Fishman's theory, by imposing no limit on the structural relationship of diglossic codes, permits practically every language community to be called diglossic. (1986: 42)

In an attempt to clarify the problem of exactly how far apart the H and L varieties in diglossia should be (see also 3.3.1) Britto developed the term "optimal distance" between H and L, i.e. the optimal genetic relatedness between the two varieties. Table 3.3 shows a three-way model that Britto came up with to illustrate his point:

Table 3.3: Britto's (1986) Model of Optimal Distance between H and L

Term:	**Description:**	**Examples[105]:**
a) Sub-Optimal Distance	Different styles and accents of the same language are used within the speech community	Great-Britain: "Cockney" English in London, Newcastle dialect, BBC English Germany: Bavarian, Swabian, Standard German
b) Optimal Distance	Varieties of the same language are used within the speech community (corresponds to Ferguson's original model)	Switzerland: Standard German and Swiss German Haiti: French Creole and Standard French
c) Super-Optimal Distance	Different, unrelated languages are used within the speech community	Paraguay: Spanish and Guaraní Scotland: Scots Gaelic and English

Based on this model Britto continues his critique of Fishman's model of diglossia by pointing out that:

> Any pair of identifiable varieties can form a diglossia in Fishman's theory, regardless of the extent of their linguistic relatedness, i.e. the codes in Fishman's diglossia may be Sub-Optimal, Optimal, or Super-Optimal. (1986: 33-34)

Britto, however, does not state any absolute measures with regard to what precisely the optimal distance between H and L constitutes, and admits that "the notion of Optimal distance is impressionistic and can be justifiably criticized" (1986: 44). Indeed, one has to wonder whether the phonological and morphological differences between varieties of Britto's first category, e.g. between BBC English and Newcastle dialect, are really sub-optimal, i.e. minimal. Trudgill (1999) reports that the dialects of the northeast of Great

[105] I supplied examples of language varieties/languages that apply to Britto's model based on his definition of optimal distance.

Britain (Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Sunderland) are particularly hard to understand for people from the south:

> As anybody who has heard English from this area will know, the accent is very distinctive, and can be rather hard for people from, especially, the south of England to understand. (Trudgill, 1999: 70)[106]

Likewise, one has to question whether the differences between Swabian and Standard German are really sub-optimal, especially if one considers that commercials and TV series with Swabian in them are now broadcast on German television with subtitles in Standard German.

The language varieties in Britto's second category are also not without problems. It is, for example, doubtful whether the phonological, lexical, and morphological differences between Standard German and Swiss German are truly optimal. In fact, these two forms of German have grown so far apart from each other that Clyne (1995) concludes:

> "Swiss German could be developed into an independent language." (Clyne, 1995: 41)

Britto's model and his examples from Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland illustrate the difficulty in creating a model or paradigm for measuring the structural relatedness between the H and L varieties in diglossia.

The previous sections discussed the origin of diglossic theory as well as subsequent additions to the original model. We now turn to an overview on the present state of diglossic theory.

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[106] For example, dialect speakers from this area would say " 'E woot coom" versus BBC English "He would come". For more information, see Trudgill (1999: 66-84).

3.4 Diglossia - The Current State of Research

As mentioned above, the field of diglossia has widened considerably. Mauro Fernández' bibliography on diglossia (1993) lists no less than 3,000 entries related to the discipline. As Kaye points out, "no other sociolinguistic topic has generated such a prodigious research effort over the same forty-year span," (2001: 121). As seen in section 3.3.2, Fishman's extension of diglossia has yielded studies (MacKinnon, 1984; Fellman, 1985) that are inconsistent with Ferguson's original paper. Hudson (2002) summarizes the present situation as follows:

> Forty years after the publication of the late Charles Ferguson's historic paper on diglossia, a coherent and generally accepted theory of diglossia remains to be formulated. (2002: 1)

3.4.1 Hudson's *Outline of a Theory of Diglossia* (2002)

In an attempt to assess the vast research on diglossia and to develop a workable definition of the term itself Hudson wrote *Outline of aTheory of Diglossia* (2002) which is considered by its reviewers (Fishman, Schiffman, Kaye, Fasold, et al) as "the most thorough and well-argued [article] since Ferguson's original 1959 article" (Fasold, 2002: 85) and "an outstanding contribution to the theory of diglossia and to sociolinguistic studies in general" (Ennaji, 2002: 81). We shall therefore take Hudson's article as a starting point for our discussion about the present state of research on diglossia, and complement it with comments from its reviewers in section 3.4.2.

One of the purposes of Hudson's outline is the attempt "to draw a workable definition between the phenomenon of diglossia in the strict sense of the term and that of diglossia in some broader sense" (Hudson, 2002: 2). In his effort to identify diglossia, i.e. which factors contribute to the existence of a diglossic speech community and which linguistic situations do not, Hudson differentiates between "pure" diglossia in the Fergusonian sense, and "societal bilingualism" (diglossia according to Fishman's model). Although Hudson restricts his definition of diglossia to Ferguson's original 1959 model from the outset (2002: 2-3), he believes that "too much has been made of the degree of structural proximity between constituent codes [i.e. the structural relatedness between H and L] as a diagnostic of diglossia" (Hudson, 2002: 14). By comparing Ferguson's, Fishman's, and Britto's approaches regarding the "optimal distance" between H and L (see 3.3.3.2), Hudson suggests that a genetic connection between H and L cannot be the sole diagnostic in assessing diglossia. He comes to the conclusion that any attempt to define diglossia by comparing the structural relatedness of the H and L varieties, whether they be genetically related or not, "is an arbitrary gesture and in itself contributes nothing of value to sociolinguistic theory" (2002: 14). Based on these points, Hudson supports Kahane and Kahane's (1979) definition of diglossia which they developed in their work on the decline and survival of prestige languages in the Western world:

> Genetically,[…] H may be a variety of L, either similar to it (say, early Medieval Latin vs. early Romance in the Carolingian age); or it may be dissimilar (late Medieval Latin vs. French in the 15th c.); or it may be a truly foreign language to speakers of L (Norman French vs. the English of the Conquest period. (Kahane and Kahane, 1979: 183)

Notwithstanding this quite unrestricted point of view, Hudson then states that structural relatedness between H and L is to a large degree inherent to diglossic speech communities:

> There is ample reason to suppose that language varieties in diglossia will in fact show a strong statistical tendency to be varieties of the same language. […] It is in the very nature of a diglossic accommodation that the linguistic varieties involved tend more often than not to bear a relatively close linguistic relationship to one another. (Hudson, 2002: 15)

According to Hudson then, genetic relatedness between H and L is not really a defining feature of diglossia but rather its natural pattern. Hudson supports his stance by quoting Ferguson himself who, in a defense of his 1959 approach, dismissed cases of non-related languages functioning as H and L as non-diglossic:

> I excluded cases where superposed on an ordinary conversational language is a totally unrelated language used for formal purposes as in the often-cited case of Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay. (Ferguson, 1991: 223)

By Hudson's own definition, language situations such as Dutch-Frisian in the northern Netherlands, French-Provençal in southern France, and Castillian-Catalán in northeastern Spain should be considered as diglossic since they are genetically closely related. Yet, Hudson rejects these cases as "pseudodiglossia" (2002: 30). His reasoning for this term is that all these regions are characterized by an unstable form of diglossia caused by the following two factors:

> 1) The H variety is invading former L domains to such a degree that in some cases, for example Frisian, L is neither acquired as mother tongue

anymore nor does it serve its purpose as everyone's native language in the speech community.

2) There is no clear functional compartmentalization in these speech communities, i.e. the H and L varieties are competing with each other "for at least some of the same socioecological niches" (Hudson, 2002: 40). (see also 3.3.1)

These factors lead Hudson to the conclusion that "these varieties must be viewed socially, politically, historically, and phenomenologically as different languages, representing different group identities, if not different cultures" (Hudson, 2002: 40).

However, by dismissing Frisian, Provençal, and Catalán as "not true" L varieties because they do not or not any longer serve as real native tongues in these communities and because some of their domains have been invaded by the respective H varieties, Hudson is ignoring an important factor since these languages, endangered or not, still have tens of thousands of speakers.[107] The fact that L exists but not as a L1- language[108] anymore, is a linguistic reality that Hudson, throughout his outline, has not fully taken into account. The following chapters will show that Low German, although in most cases not any longer acquired as L1 in the Grafschaft Bentheim, still fulfills many of the functions of a low language. The next chapters will also illustrate that even though the

[107] Frisian, for example, is spoken by some 400,000 people in and around The Netherlands province of Friesland. For more information, see McArthur, 1992 (421-22). For information on the situation of Frisian in Germany, see von Polenz (1999, 172-173) and Matras & Reershemius (2003).

[108] The acronym L1 ("Language one") stems from the field of Language Acquisition. It generally refers to someone's native or primary language, and is often used in contrast to L2, i.e. a language that someone is learning after he/she has acquired L1.

domains of L (i.e. Platt) have been encroached upon by H (i.e. Standard German), it still does function as low language in my research area.

Although Hudson places himself in the more "traditional" camp (i.e. diglossia strictly in the Fergusonian sense) with regard to the structural relatedness between H and L, he does not explicitly condemn other, more encompassing approaches. Hudson does not offer a "fix-it-all" solution to the problem, but rather believes that a common middle ground is needed in this matter and concludes with an appeal for further research:

> What is actually called for in the further study of diglossia is the establishment of a balance […] between two complementary approaches: one, a universalist approach [Fishman's model and its practitioners], which emphasizes the similarities between diglossia and other sociolinguistic situations, and another, particularistic approach, which focuses upon the differences. (Hudson, 2002: 14)

Ultimately, Hudson links the existence of diglossic speech communities to "stability or direction of displacement of codes in the event of shift" (Hudson, 2002: 3). While he considers Frisian, Provençal, and Catalán as "pseudodiglossic" because they have lost ground against their respective H varieties, Hudson points out that some of Ferguson's original case studies remain 'pure' diglossic precisely because their functional development has gone in the opposite direction:

> Colloquial Arabic, Dhimotikí [the L variety in Greece], and Schwyzertüütsch [Swiss German] have all gained ground in the twentieth century, to one degree or another, at the expense of their coterritorial elevated counterparts.(Hudson, 2002: 8)

These developments, which confirm the prediction Ferguson has made more than forty years ago, merit their being categorized as 'pure' diglossic since they are so dissimilar to

the numerous cases where a vernacular has been eroded or displaced by a more prestigious language:

> The fact […] that is precisely the elevated or culturally prestigious variety and not the vernacular, that has been displaced to some extent is reason enough to distinguish these from other cases [Frisian, Provençal, Platt, etc] where it is typically the vernacular that has been displaced, often to the point of extinction, by a prestigious competitor. (Hudson, 2002: 8)

Hudson concludes his article with the concession that diglossia in Ferguson's sense is "not necessarily immutable for all time" (Hudson, 2002: 43) and thus gives further research some room for additions or modifications to the field. However, Hudson stresses the importance for a "uniform use" of the term diglossia itself for future research (Hudson, 2002: 43).

In this section I discussed Hudson's attempt to formulate an ultimate definition of diglossia some forty years after Ferguson's original paper. I illustrated Hudson's point of differentiating between 'pure' diglossia, 'societal bilingualism', and 'pseudodiglossia', and showed that, in spite of the vast number of articles written on this subject, a uniform definition of the term diglossia is still lacking. In the following section I will briefly discuss the reception of Hudson's outline among other scholars of diglossia.

3.4.2 The Reception of Hudson's Outline

Since Fishman's contribution caused the field of diglossia to extend so considerably, I will here first discuss his reply to Hudson's outline. I will then show the replies of two other scholars, Paulston and Schiffman, before concluding with Hudson's own rebuttal.

As can be expected, Fishman welcomes Hudson's attempt to define diglossia beyond the question of genetic relatedness between the H and L varieties:

> From my point of view, this is a considerable and very welcome loosening of the reins and one which I and a few others have advocated during the past nearly 30 years. (Fishman, 2002: 94)

However, Fishman insists that societal multilingualism and diglossia are related phenomena and should be studied concomitantly rather than separately:

> Neither parsimony nor good sociolinguistic theory require (nor do they benefit from) separating related phenomena so that they have nothing to do with each other. (Fishman, 2002: 100)

Paulston and Schiffman, while mainly agreeing with Hudson's outline, question the need for a uniform definition of diglossia altogether. Paulston (2002), for example, reflects on what is actually gained if such a definition ever came into being:

> Why do we need a metanarrative for diglossia? What will a privileged discourse of diglossia accomplish, which the present diversity and disagreements over meanings cannot achieve? (Paulston, 2002: 128)

Although Paulston agrees that the present situation causes "considerable confusion" (2002: 98), she concludes that the concept of diglossia in itself might be inherently indefinable:

> I think [it] is indicative that diglossia does not form a metanarrative, does not really function at the level of a general theory. (Paulston, 2002: 131)

Similar to Paulston, Schiffman (2002) is also concerned that the need for a broad definition or for sociolinguistic paradigms might be unnecessary and even passé:

> My first comment would be that typologies per se are now seen as theoretically passé, and attempts to construct paradigms […] are now seen as old-fashioned, perhaps futile […] since attempts to classify any social phenomenon are now dismissed as deeply "political", or worse, exclusionary and discriminatory. (Schiffman, 2002: 141)

In spite of these doubts, however, Schiffman believes that Fishman's extension should be included in a unified definition of diglossia. Based on his work on Tamil in India, Sri-Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore, which he defines as 'triglossia' (H-Tamil, L-Tamil, and English), Schiffman rejects any dismissal of Fishman's contribution:

> In my view, then, one cannot dismiss Fishman diglossia [*sic*] as being lesser or different. […] Extended diglossia is not "weaker" or subservient to classical diglossia but rather operates on the same plane, so to speak. (Schiffman, 2002: 143)

In this section I briefly discussed the reception of Hudson's outline among some preeminent scholars of diglossia. In spite of the doubts some researchers have as to the need for a unified definition of diglossia (Paulston, Schiffman), Hudson's article had had a considerable impact on diglossic theory. Fasold sums it up as follows:

> His [Hudson's] work is theoretical in the true sense to an extent seldom seen in sociolinguistics. In writing this response, I have spent some considerable effort trying to see where his central ideas might be refutable. I have failed. (Fasold, 2002: 91)

The following section discusses Hudson's rebuttal to the reception his outline has met.

3.4.3 Hudson's Rebuttal

In his rebuttal Hudson focuses on the similarities rather than the differences the various contributions to his article have in common and stresses their importance:

> The contributors to this volume certainly do not speak with one voice on every detail, […] yet, as much as anything else, I am struck by certain fundamental threads of agreement that course through these contributions, and by the united sense of how the study of diglossia […] should proceed from here. (Hudson, 2002: 151)

In defense of his own rather strict application of the term diglossia Hudson notes that past research has compelled him to do so. By doing so, Hudson echoes Timm's and Britto's critique on the overuse and partly abuse of Fishman's extension (see 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.3.2) in the field of diglossia:

> It is partly, I am certain, in reaction to a tendency, which has bulked large in the general sociolinguistic literature of forty years, to apply the term "diglossia" indiscriminately to a wide range of community verbal repertoires involving differential functional allocation of codes, thus dulling the conceptual edge of Ferguson's original notion and reducing its potential theoretical value. (Hudson, 2002: 154)

Hudson hastens to add, however, that none of the reviewers of his article, nor indeed he himself, view Fishman's contribution, i.e. societal multilingualism, as an isolated and unrelated phenomenon:

> I hear no voice raised in these pages in favor of the position that diglossia, again in its very narrow sense, should be anointed as an isolated, polar opposite to some undifferentiated form of societal bilingualism. (Hudson, 2002: 152)

In fact, Hudson believes that it is important to accept Fishman's extension as part of diglossic theory while still recognizing the distinction between Ferguson's and Fishman's concepts:

> It is incumbent upon us all to recognize the distinction here [between Ferguson's and Fishman's models], and indeed to embrace it. (Hudson, 2002: 153)

Similar to his focus article, Hudson tries to create some common ground by combining Ferguson's and Fishman's models as two contributions to a similar phenomenon:

> There is agreement here, I am convinced, that Ferguson was right in drawing our attention to the specifics of the diglossic cases that he sought to describe, and that Fishman was also correct in compelling us to think about specific diglossia within a larger conceptual framework. (Hudson, 2002: 153)

In doing so, Hudson specifically mentions his hope that further research will refrain from the question whether Ferguson's or Fishman's model is the only acceptable one in diglossic theory:

> It [the discussion about Fishman's extension] is not the issue here, it never should have become the issue in the past, and, hopefully, this discussion may help to lay it to rest as an issue for the future. (Hudson, 2002: 153)

With regards to formulating a unified definition of diglossia, Hudson repeats the need for a common typology and calls for a research that eventually produces "an unequivocal concept-term relationship for every type of sociolinguistic relationship, […] which might be of general validity in every society" (Hudson, 2002: 152). However, by mentioning the fact that the term "diglossia" does not translate into Greek (one of

Ferguson's case studies), Hudson concedes that the very meaning of the term itself might be problematic (2002: 162). Indeed, Ferguson (1991) himself admits in one of his last articles on the subject:

> I can imagine a time when the term itself [diglossia] may be abandoned in favor of a more precise and principled terminology. (Ferguson, 1991: 232)

However, leaving the appropriateness or inappropriateness of labeling aside, Hudson reminds us all that it is the phenomenon of diglossia, whether in a narrow or broad sense, which counts:

> It is the phenomenon itself, and its underlying explanation, and not the label, that are the focus of our investigative energies. (Hudson, 2002: 162)

The remainder of this chapter discusses Ferguson's sixth rubric, namely the stability of diglossic speech communities. Indeed, stability of diglossia is a crucial component of this work since the L-variety in my study is now deemed an endangered language (see section 2.11.2.).[109] The following section examines two case studies of diglossic stability from the German-speaking areas of Europe.

3.5 The Stability of Diglossic Speech Communities - Two Case Studies

According to Ferguson, diglossic speech communities are stable communities, which exist "at least several centuries" and sometimes "well over a thousand years" (1996: 31, see also 3.1.6.). Furthermore, according to Ferguson, Hudson (2002), Schiffman (2002) and others, if there is to be a language shift in diglossic speech

[109] The stability of diglossia is discussed further in chapter six.

communities, then it is in favor of L, i.e. former domains of H will be taken up by L (see 3.1.6)[110].

This section then discusses two case studies where the stability of a diglossic speech community has been affected to such a degree that it resulted in a language shift. One is the present linguistic situation in German-speaking Switzerland, where L (Swiss German) has indeed gained ground against H (Standard German). The second example examines the present linguistic situation in Germany, where L (here: any German dialect including Platt) has not only lost considerable ground against H (Standard German) but was replaced by the standard language in many areas.[111] This section concludes with a discussion of these two opposite situations.

3.5.1 Case Study 1: The Rise of Swiss German in Switzerland

The 1848 constitution of the Swiss *Bundesstaat* (federal state) established German, French and Italian as national languages. Swiss German, a member of the Allemanic family within the larger group of Western Germanic languages, had been

[110] A language shift in diglossic speech communities must be seen chronologically. For example, until the Reformation in Germany (early 16th century), the L-variety (Swiss German) was the only language in Switzerland. High German established itself only with the onset of the religious changes of the Reformation, i.e. it became the H-variety because "of its new role as the liturgical language of Protestantism" (Schiffman, 1991: 178). Likewise, Platt was the only L-variety in northern Germany until the 15/16th century. Only after an H-variety (e.g. High German in both Switzerland and northern Germany) has been established at the expense of former L-domains, can one speak of a diglossic speech community. As the situation in Switzerland shows (see 4.1.), an ensuing, usually much later, switch of domains from H back to L is a possible development in diglossia, i.e. after L has lost domains to H, it may regain those domains at a much later time.

[111] Some of these are Westfalen, Sachsen, and northern Hessen. For more information, see Eichhoff (2000, 80-88).

spoken in the central part of Switzerland for centuries. The difference between Standard German and Swiss German (*Schwyzertütsch*), however, is so large that, according to Clyne, "Swiss German could be developed into an independent language" (1995: 41).[112] Like Platt, Swiss German has neither a spoken nor a written standard, and "it exists only in the form of different local and regional varieties" (Clyne, 1995: 41). It was Standard German thus that was used for all written communication and in parliament. The following excerpt shows how different the Zürich variety of Swiss German is from High German[113]:

Low Variety – Swiss German

> Een Schwyzer isch er zwaar nie woorde, weder en papiirige na äine im Heerz ine; und eebigs häd mer syner Sprach aagemerkt, das er nüd daa uufgewachsen ischt. Nüd nu s Muul häd Ussländer verraate, au syni Möödeli. Er had lieber mit syne tüütsche Landslüüte weder mit de ¥häimische vercheert, und ischt Mitgliid und Zaalmäischter von irem Veräin gsy.

High Variey –Standard German

> Ein Schweizer ist er zwar nie geworden, weder auf dem Papier noch im Herzen; und man hat es seiner Sprache angemerkt, dass er nicht dort aufgewachsen ist. Nicht nur die Sprache hat den Ausländer verraten,, sondern auch seine Gewohnheiten. Er hat lieber mit seinen deutschen Landsleuten als mit den Einheimischen verkehrt, und ist Mitglied und Zahlmeister ihres Vereins gewesen.

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[112] Linguistically, Swiss German descended from Middle High German, rather than High German. (Schiffman, 2000: 142) The most important reason why Swiss German has not been declared an independent language is that "the Swiss-Germans see themselves as part of the German literary and cultural tradition and do not wish to break with this" (Clyne, 1995: 41).

[113] From: Wardhaugh, (1986:94).

English
He never actually became Swiss, neither on a paper nor in his heart, and you could tell from his language that he had not grown up there. It was not only his language that showed that he was a foreigner – his way of life showed it too. He preferred to associate with his German compatriots rather than with the natives, and was a member and the treasurer of their society.

According to Barbour and Stevenson (1990), Standard German (the H variety) enjoyed its peak in Switzerland around the turn of the century (19th-20th century). This was mainly due to an influx of Germans who occupied influential positions (business, local government, etc.). Since then, however, Swiss German (the L variety) has undergone quite a resurgence, at first in the 1920s and 1930s as a means of "linguistic patriotism" (Barbour and Stevenson, 1990: 212) in the face of Nazi Germany, and then in the 1960s as "an expression of democratic and anti-authoritarian values" (Barbour and Stevenson, 1990: 212).[114] Clyne comments that the political factor of Swiss neutrality has also played an important role in the increased use of Swiss German in recent decades (1995: 47). This development resulted in a situation where the functional distribution of H and L has changed quite drastically. For example, nowadays Swiss German is used almost exclusively in such formal situations as weddings, church services, secondary education, the military, and also increasingly on TV in talk shows, game shows, and advertising (Clyne, 1995: 43). Barbour and Stevenson point out that even formal

[114] For more information on Swiss German, see Clyne (1995: 47-50), and Bigler et al. (1987).

speeches in parliament tend to be delivered more and more in Swiss German (1990: 214)[115] and conclude:

> Standard [German] is still spoken in certain situations but there are now very few in which it is considered essential or even normal. (1990: 214)

Clyne comes to a similar conclusion:

> Dialect [in Switzerland] is making inroads into formal domains, and even into formal speech, such as addresses on the National Day. (1995: 43)

Keller comments on the importance and widespread use of the L-variety as a means of daily communication among L-speakers in German-speaking Switzerland:

> It is psychologically impossible for any two Swiss of any class or occupation ever to address each other privately in anything but the "Low" variety. (1982: 91)

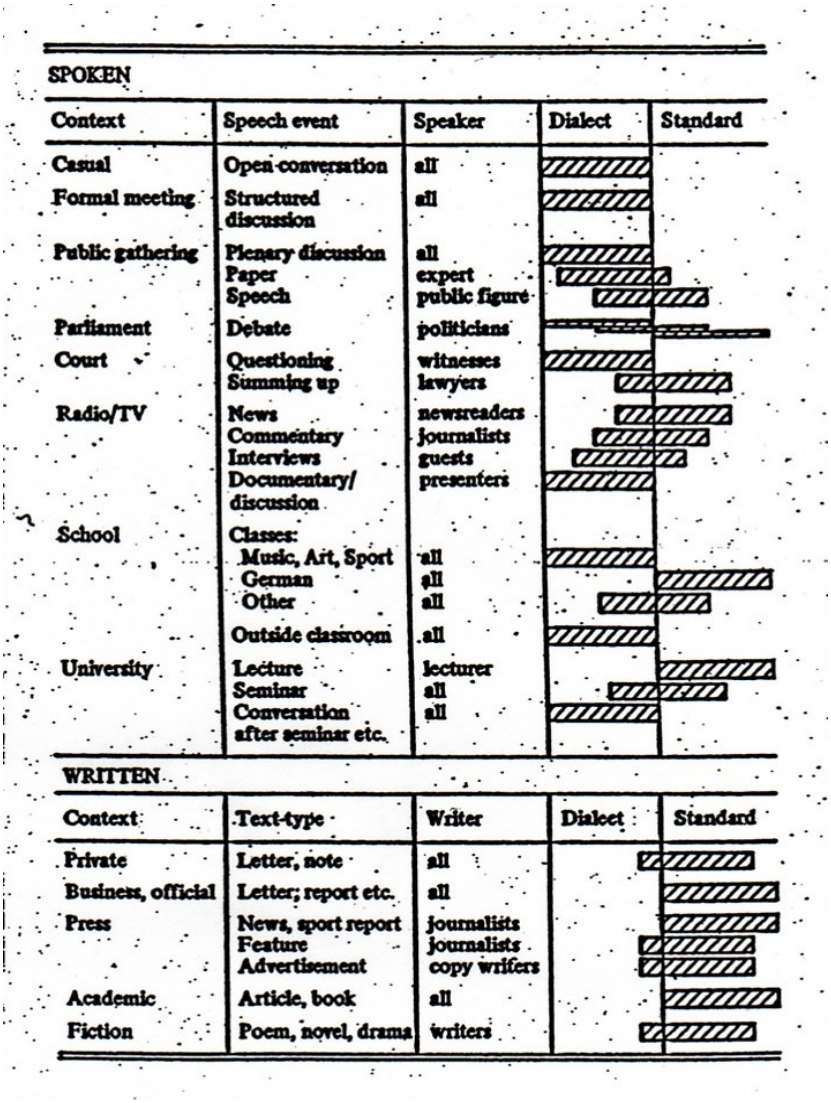
According to Clyne, the use of Standard German is now largely confined to the written domain and is referred to as *Schriftdeutsch* (written German)[116]. However, as Barbour and Stevenson point out, Swiss German has made inroads even here with most speakers using Swiss German for private correspondence:

> The 'average Swiss German' speaks and writes almost exclusively in dialect and reads almost exclusively standard. (1990: 216)[117]

[115] This is, however, not true for the Swiss Federal Parliament where speeches are held in Standard German, or in French or Italian.
[116] *Schriftdeutsch* comprises any kind of newspaper, as well as worldwide fiction literature (in translation), and non-fiction literature (Clyne, 1995: 43).
[117] This statement is confirmed by the increasing number of Swiss Germans who use the L-form for text messaging. Formal or longer writing, however, still tends to be in Standard German.

Table 3.4, taken from Barbour and Stevenson's study, shows the functional distribution of Swiss German and Standard German in Switzerland:

Table 3.4: The Functional Distribution of L and H in German-speaking Switzerland[118]



SPOKEN

Context	Speech event	Speaker	Dialect	Standard
Casual	Open conversation	all		
Formal meeting	Structured discussion	all		
Public gathering	Plenary discussion	all		
	Paper	expert		
	Speech	public figure		
Parliament	Debate	politicians		
Court	Questioning	witnesses		
	Summing up	lawyers		
Radio/TV	News	newsreaders		
	Commentary	journalists		
	Interviews	guests		
	Documentary/ discussion	presenters		
School	Classes:			
	Music, Art, Sport	all		
	German	all		
	Other	all		
	Outside classroom	all		
University	Lecture	lecturer		
	Seminar	all		
	Conversation after seminar etc.	all		

WRITTEN

Context	Text-type	Writer	Dialect	Standard
Private	Letter, note	all		
Business, official	Letter; report etc.	all		
Press	News, sport report	journalists		
	Feature	journalists		
	Advertisement	copy writers		
Academic	Article, book	all		
Fiction	Poem, novel, drama	writers		

[118] From Barbour and Stevenson (1990: 215).

Table 3.4 shows that the L-variety in German-speaking Switzerland now occupies such formal domains as education, court, and universities. It confirms that L has indeed gained ground in favor of H. This strong change of language distribution is accompanied by a prestige change as well. The increasing use of L among speakers in the area has also led to an increase in L's prestige - a situation that is quite the opposite of Ferguson's original assertion that H is seen as superior to L (see also 3.1.2). Barbour and Stevenson comment that "few German-Swiss today would accept" the notion that Standard German is superior to Swiss German (1990: 212). In fact, Clyne reports that many Swiss-Germans have developed quite negative attitudes toward the H variety:

> Many German-speaking Swiss resent Standard German because of difficulties encountered with it at school, or because it is the symbol of anxiety, frustration and suppression. (1995: 42)

Schiffman points out that attitudes toward Standard German among the Swiss are also determined by political factors:

> It seems obvious that what has happened within Swiss Alemannic linguistic culture is a change in attitudes about Hochdeutsch [High German], and the sources of these attitudinal changes are not hard to find. One obvious reason for a change is to be found in the politics of Switzerland's northern neighbor over the last 100 years. (1991: 178)

Barbour and Stevenson (1990: 213) report that the status of High German in Switzerland is now such that in recent years it has been regarded more and more as a foreign language altogether by speakers of Swiss German. In fact, the popularity of Standard German among Swiss-Germans has taken such a dive that in a survey from

1988 about foreign language preferences Standard German came in third behind English and French (Barbour and Stevenson, 1990: 214).[119]

The rise of Swiss German in the 20th century confirms Ferguson's point that if the equilibrium of diglossic speech communities is shaken, then it is in favor of the L variety (see also 3.1.6.). However, given the dramatic changes that both Swiss and Standard German have undergone with regards to their functional distribution, one must ask whether the present situation in Switzerland can still be called diglossic since the L-variety has received official status in such H-domains as education, and parliamentary debates. The overlapping of H and L in more than half of the domains also runs contrary to Ferguson's original concept of functional distribution in which "the two sets [H and L] overlap only very slightly" (Ferguson, 1996: 28). Hudson maintains that diglossia in German-speaking Switzerland is as stable as ever:

> In the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland, diglossia is as ubiquitous and as unremarkable as the air people breathe. (2002: 42)

However, the encroachment of L into H domains has led Clyne to the conclusion that diglossia might not be the proper term anymore to define the present linguistic situation in German-speaking Switzerland:

> It appears that diglossia based on domains is no longer an appropriate means of depicting the relation between Standard and dialect in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. (1995: 43)

[119] It is interesting to note here that the rise of Swiss German has met with disapproval in the non German-speaking parts of Switzerland, especially with Swiss French who learn Standard German in school. Clyne reports that French speaking Swiss feel "excluded" from the larger group of Swiss German speakers on the grounds of dialect use (1995: 46).

Instead, Clyne proposes Siebert and Sitta's term "medial diglossia" (1986, 1988) to adequately define the situation in German-speaking Switzerland. According to Siebert and Sitta, the functional distribution of domains in medial diglossia is designated by the medium, i.e. speaking (Swiss German) or reading (Standard German). As Clyne points out, the *speaking mode* and the *reading mode* have more to do with psychological domains rather than real physical domains:

> The 'speaking mode' expresses spontaneity, intimacy and interaction; the 'reading mode' expresses authority, distance and formality (1995, 43).

In this section I discussed the diglossic situation in German-speaking Switzerland, where, during the course of the 20th century, the L variety (Swiss German) has gained considerable ground in favor of the H variety (Standard German). I showed that the rise of Swiss German is consistent with Ferguson's original ideas as far as the functional distribution of H and L is concerned. The ensuing loss of prestige of H, however, seems contradictory to Ferguson's model. Finally, I discussed the fact that some scholars (Clyne, Siebert and Sitta) are doubtful whether diglossia is still an adequate term for the present situation in the German-speaking Swiss cantons.

The following section discusses the opposite phenomenon: the decline of diglossia in Germany proper.

3.5.2 Case Study 2: The Decline of German Dialects in Germany

While Switzerland experienced and continues to experience the strengthening of the L- variety, the situation in many regions of Germany is the opposite. With the emergence of Early New High German (ca. 1400) and its successor New High German

(ca. 1600) as the new H-variety, virtually every part of Germany became diglossic with Standard German serving as the nationwide H-variety, and numerous local dialects, be they Bavarian, Swabian, Hessian, Platt, Thuringian, Saxon etc. serving as the L-variety.[120] Indeed, one of the main reasons why a united Germany was not formed in modern times until 1871 was a strong local loyalty and a distrust of centralist governments that many Germans felt.[121] Dialect use until that time and well into the 20th century was so universal in Germany that *Hochdeutsch* (High German) was widely regarded as "a superposed variety that was nobody's mother tongue" (Schiffman, 1991: 179).

Schiffman (2002) describes the German dialectal situation of the past as follows:

> In other words, in earlier times every "German" speaker spoke an L-variety dialect as mother tongue and learned *Hochdeutsch* in school. This is obvious by looking at the varieties of German […] before the late nineteenth century. (2002: 145)

The following poem from Bavaria exemplifies the differences between German L-varieties and the German H-variety:[122]

[120] The period of Early New High German is from 1350-1600, and the period of New High German is from 1600-1800. For more information, see Waterman (1991: 102-162).
[121] The *Deutsches Reich* under the leadership of Prussia was founded after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. For more information, see Dahms (1991: 213-226).
[122] From: Lockwood (1976: 142). For more information on German dialects, see Russ (1989) and Noble (1983).

Low Variety - Bavarian

I bin a orms Maderl,
hab nix als a Mihl,
a Kholb und zwo Khialan,
und dos is halt nit viel.

Brauch nix, mei liabs Herzle,
kha Khuah und kha Mihl,
die Liab, dos is 's Anzge
is olls, was i will.

Wonns a so manst, mei Buable,
so glabet i 's schier.
No, do host zärscht a Busserl,
und donn khäär i diar.

High Variety - Standard German

Ich bin ein armes Mädchen,
habe nichts als eine Mühle,
ein Kalb und zwei Kühe
und das ist halt nicht viel.

Du brauchst nichts, mein liebes Herz,
keine Kuh und keine Mühle,
die Liebe, das ist das Einzige,
Das ist alles, was ich will.

Wenn du es so meinst, mein Junge
so glaube ich es bestimmt.
Nun, da hast du zuerst einen Kuß,
und dann gehöre ich dir.

English - my translation

I am a poor girl,
have nothing but a mill,
a calf and two cows
and that is not much.
You don't need anything, my heart,
no cow and no mill,
love, that is the only thing
that is all that I want.

If you mean it like that, my boy
then I believe you certainly.
Well, here you first have a kiss,
and then I belong to you.

This state of affairs, so similar to the situation in Switzerland, began to change after World War II. Due to the massive shifts of population (refugee treks from the East into the West), the H-variety High German became more and more important as a means of communication among Germans. For instance neither Pomeranian nor Bavarian would have served as a suitable means of communication for a refugee from Pomerania finding shelter in an Alpine village in Bavaria. The so-called *Zwangseinquartierung* (forced shelter), a policy of the West-German government and the Western allies by which West-Germans who had room to spare were forced to take in refugees, made this situation a daily reality for millions of Germans.

While Schiffman thinks that the upheavals in population change immediately after World War II are the sole cause for the increased use of the H-variety, others such as Hudson believe that the decline of the respective L-varieties in Germany is actually a century-old process that culminated in the population changes of the 20th century.

As possible reasons, Hudson (2002) lists:

> The emergence of Standard German at the expense of the local dialects over a period of more than 500 years, [..] Luther's translation of the Bible into Eastern Middle German, the gradual acceptance of Luther's German in the Catholic south, political unification in 1871, and universal education in the twentieth century. (Hudson, 2002: 33)[123]

Von Polenz (1999) places the factors for dialect erosion in Germany mainly in the 20th century:

> Es kam seit der Jahrhundertmitte teilweise zum Dialektverlust durch Massenflucht und -vertreibung seit 1945, Motorisierung und beruflichle Mobilität, in den beiden deutschen Staaten mehr als in der Schweiz und Österreich. (1999: 457)[124]

To this list one may add the increasing spread of electronic mass media in the 1950s and 1960s (radio, television), which uses Standard German only as its means of communication. The result of all these developments has been a massive erosion of the L-varieties (*Dialektabbau*) all over Germany. In many instances, a vernacular form of the H-variety, the so-called *Umgangssprache*, has become the mother tongue of many Germans. Schiffman (2002) summarizes the present situation as follows:

> Hochdeutsch, or a vernacular version of it (known as *Umgangssprache*), is now the mother tongue of many Germans, having replaced the local L-varieties, particularly in urban areas. (2002: 145)

[123] It is interesting to notice that Hudson's reasons almost mirror the many reasons that caused Platt to erode over the centuries (see also 2.9.).
[124] "Loss of dialect originated partly through mass flight and mass expulsion since 1945, motorization and professional mobility, in the two German states more than in Switzerland and Austria." - my translation.

Eichhoff (2000) draws a similar conclusion with regards to the rise of the *Umgangssprache*:

> Dialektabbau und Dialektverlust haben in den letzten Jahrzehnten die deutsche Sprachlandschaft nachhaltig verändert. Anstelle von Dialekten, die um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts noch verwendet wurden, bilden heute die Umgangssprachen das weit überwiegende Medium der Kommunikation.[125] (2000: 82)

In fact, the erosion of the L-varieties has been so strong that many areas in Germany are by now virtually "dialect-free", a situation commented on by Eichhoff:

> In vielen Städten und ganzen Landschaften von Westfalen über Nordhessen bis Sachsen werden die autochtonen Dialekte praktisch nicht mehr gesprochen, in anderen Gegenden sind sie stark zurückgegangen. [126](2000: 82)

Eichhoff (2000) points out that knowledge of an L-variety in Germany proper is strongest in the south (Bavaria, Southern Baden-Würtemberg, Saarland, and Rheinland-Pfalz), and weakest in the center regions (Southern Lower Saxony, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Southern Brandenburg). Knowledge of Platt, on the other hand, is strongest in the northernmost state of Germany, Schleswig-Holstein (Eichhoff, 2000: 83; see also 2.10.). This distribution has caused many researchers (Stellmacher, 1990, Eichhoff, 2000) to call the South *dialektreich* (rich in dialect), and the North *dialektarm* (poor in dialect).

The phenomenon of L-variety erosion in Germany has been noted by many researchers of diglossia (Hudson: 2002, Schiffman: 2002, Fasold: 2002). However, apart

[125] "Dialect erosion and loss of dialect drastically changed the German speaking areas in the last decades. Instead of dialects, which were still used in the 19th century, the Umgangssprachen nowadays form the main medium of communication." - my translation.

[126] "In many cities and entire regions from Westphalia to Northern Hessia to Saxony the native dialects are practically not spoken anymore; in other areas they have strongly eroded." - my translation.

from listing possible reasons for it, no one has so far satisfactorily explained why the German situation runs contrary to Ferguson's original concept of stability in diglossic speech communities. Besides historical reasons, one crucial factor here is the language that parents choose to speak with their children. As Hudson (2002) points out, any erosion of an L-variety might be connected to a conscious decision by parents to raise their kids in the H-variety only:

> It is scarcely imaginable, [..] that any change toward full utilization of H could take place without the willingness on the part of the adults to speak H for conversational purposes, especially with their children. (2002: 7)

Fasold (2002) disagrees:

> No one gives up L in favor of H because no parents would ever use H exclusively with their children. (2002: 90)

In chapter four I will show that in the case of Platt Hudson's point actually became a reality. Many parents choose indeed the H-variety (Standard German) for raising their kids, deliberately avoiding any use of Platt (the L-variety) with them. This is done mostly as not to interfere with their children's' education, which, unlike Switzerland, is dominated by Standard German as the sole medium of communication. The parents' decision to not expose their children to the L-variety has resulted in a negative impact not only on the teenagers' command of the L-variety but also on their attitudes toward it.

The loss of L-varieties in Germany calls for a comparison with Switzerland where the opposite scenario is in place (rise of the L-varieties). Schiffman (2002) concludes:

> Thus a situation that used to mirror the H/L diglossia of Switzerland everywhere in the German-speaking countries, [..] is now a standard-with-dialects situation and would only be characterized as diglossia in places where dialect persists. (2002: 145)

Similar to the developments in Switzerland, researchers have asked the question whether the situation in Germany still qualifies as diglossic (Fasold: 2002, Schiffman: 2002). Schiffman (1997) believes that certain areas in Germany might be more accurately defined by the term *partial diglossia* and gives the following definition of it:

> A society where everyone controls L, but only some actively control H, or the opposite case where everyone speaks and writes H, but some also control an L variety.[127] (1997: 212)

Von Polenz (1999) thinks that only the northern and southern parts of German-speaking countries are still characterized by real diglossia in the Fergusonian sense:

> Nur in bestimmten Gebieten (vor allem deutschsprachiger Teil der Schweiz, Südtirol, Norddeutschland) gibt es noch eine scharfe Diglossie [..] mit konsequentem Wechsel zwischen Dialekt und Standard ohne vermittelnde Zwischenstufen.[128] (von Polenz, 1999: 459)

Von Polenz' point confirms Eichhoff's distribution of the L-varieties in present-day Germany. Thus, to define geographically the "places where dialect persists" (Schiffman, 2002: 145), the conclusion is that the present extent of diglossia in Germany proper has been reduced to the country's peripheries, i.e. Low German in the North and the Allemanic dialects in the South with either partial diglossia or no diglossia at all in large parts of the center and of former East Germany. In other words, diglossia in Germany is not a uniform phenomenon but a highly regional one. For example, Bavarian, Swabian, and *Kölsch* (the dialect of Cologne) all have a particular prestige associated with them,

[127] Full diglossia in this terminology is diglossia in the Fergusonian sense.
[128] "Only in certain areas (especially in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Southern Tyrol, Northern Germany) exists there still sharp diglossia with consequent change between dialect and standard without a connecting intermediate stage." - my translation.

which often manifests itself strongest in the cultural/musical scene. A good example for the popularity of *Kölsch* is the rock band BAP (Kölsch for "father"), who achieved widespread national fame in the 1980s and 1990s with lyrics that were completely sung in dialect.[129] Likewise, certain mass media (radio programs, cartoons, etc.) and some regional TV series in Bavaria and Swabian are produced in dialect.[130] Low German, too, has its own TV productions, most notably the talk show *Talk op Platt* (which has been running since the late 1970s), the Low German-colored *Ohnsorg Theater* from Hamburg, and the popular *Plattdeutsche Morgenandacht* ("Low German morning sermon") on local radio stations. It should be noted that, similar to the situation in Switzerland during the 1960s and 1970s, the use of dialect in some German mass media owes its success partly to the so-called *Mundartwelle* ("dialect wave") or *Dialektrenaissance* ("dialect renaissance") of the 1970s and 1980s.[131]

Von Polenz summarizes the present fragmentary nature of diglossia in the German-speaking countries as follows:

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[129] For those interested in this group, their third record *Vöör Usszeschnigge* ("For freaks"), and fourth record *Von drusse no drinne* ("From the outside to the inside"), are considered to be their best recordings.

[130] A good example from Bavaria is the popular 1980s TV series *Königlich Bayrisches Amtsgericht* ("Royal Bavarian District Court"), in which many of the actors speak Bavarian only.

[131] The *Mundartwelle* was a nation-wide phenomenon in Germany and Austria and produced, especially in the Vienna artists scene, mainly singer-songwriters who sung in dialect, such as Reinhard Fendrich and Georg Danzer from Austria, Knut Kiesewetter and Hannes Wader from northern Germany, and the aforementioned BAP from Cologne. For more information on the use of *Kölsch* in mass media (stage, radio, TV), see Reinert-Schneider (1987:55 -177). It must be pointed out, though, that the *Mundartwelle* faded out in the late 1980s. For example, newer popular TV series of the 90s, such as *Gute Zeiten, schlechte Zeiten* ("Good times, bad times") are practically devoid of any dialect use.

> Dialektsprechen hat nach wie vor die stärkste Position im deutschsprachigen Teil der Schweiz, danach in Österreich und Süddeutschland, die schwächste im binnenländischen Norddeutschland, von Westfalen, südlichem Niedersachsen bis Brandenburg und in Sachsen. Höchste Prozentsätze (80-90) gab es beispielsweise in Österreich in Alpentälern, mittlere (zwischen 60 und 80) in Bayern, Baden-Würtemberg und Schleswig-Holstein, niedrige (40-60) in Nordrhein-Westfalen und Berlin. (1999: 457)[132]

Based on these findings, one can draw the following diglossic figure of the German-speaking countries with Switzerland at the one end and southern Lower-Saxony at the other end:

Figure 3.1: Present-Day Diglossia in German Speaking Countries

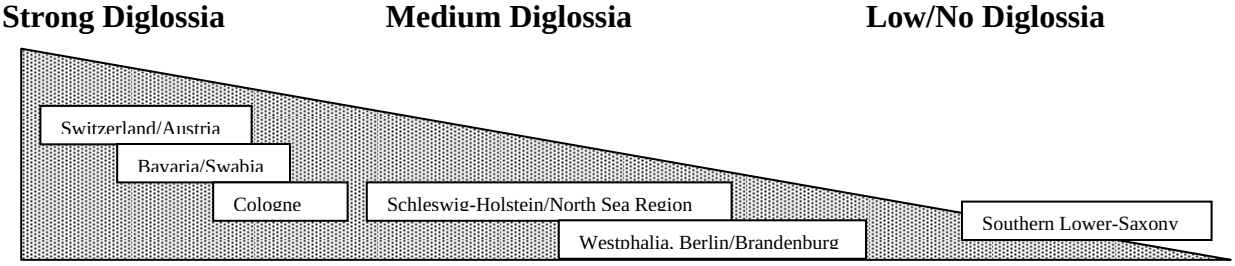

Figure 3.1 illustrates the fragmentation of diglossia in Germany. It shows that the interior of Lower-Saxony (e.g. cities like *Hannover*, *Hildesheim*, *Salzgitter*, and *Braunschweig*) underwent the strongest dialect erosion in Germany proper.[133] The situation in southern Lower-Saxony is all the more remarkable since it was formerly

[132] "Speaking a dialect enjoys still the strongest position in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, then in Austria and southern Germany, the weakest position in the interior of northern Germany, from Westphalia, southern Lower Saxony until Brandenburg and Saxony. The highest percent rates were for example in Alpine valleys in Austria (80-90), medium ones (between 60 and 80) in Bavaria, Baden-Würtemberg, and Schleswig-Holstein, low ones (40-60) in Nordrhein-Westphalia and Berlin." - my translation.

[133] It is slightly ironic that many inhabitants of Hannover pride themselves on speaking the "purest" High German in all of Germany.

firmly embedded in the Low German- speaking area with *Ostfälisch* (Eastphalian) as its main dialect. The absence or minimal presence of diglossia in these parts of Germany indicates that the H-variety (Standard German) is now used for virtually every domain, even in such traditional L-domains as conversations with friends and family.[134] The dominance of Standard German in this part of Lower-Saxony leads us to chapter four, where I discuss the functional distribution of the H- and L-varieties in my research area, the *Grafschaft Bentheim*, which is situated in the north-western part of Lower-Saxony, about 300 km west of Hannover and Braunschweig.

In this section I discussed the stability of diglossic speech communities. I showed that, once diglossia is established, potential language shifts in the speech community will be in favor of L, i.e. the L-variety takes over former H-domains. This has been the case in the German-speaking part of Switzerland where the L-variety is now employed in education and politics. I then discussed the opposite case, where the L-variety is losing ground in favor of H. This has been the case in almost all areas of Germany and has led to dialect erosion or dialect loss in some parts of the country. I concluded this section with a chart of present-day diglossia in the German-speaking countries and showed that pure diglossia can now mainly be found at the peripheries of the German-speaking area, i.e. in northern Germany, and in large parts of Austria, Switzerland, and southern Germany.

[134] One possible reason for dialect erosion in this area might be the disproportionally high number of refugees that streamed into the region after W.W. II. In a field study in the county of Lüneburg (south of Hamburg), Erdmann (1992) found a direct connection between the number of former refugees who settled there and dialect loss. For more information, see Erdmann (1992).

3.6 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the concept of diglossia. In section 3.1 I showed how Ferguson (1959) developed the term diglossia to characterize speech communities in which an H-variety and an L-variety of the same language are employed for different communicative situations.[135] I also discussed in detail the several features (rubrics), such as function, prestige, grammar etc., that set the H- and L-varieties set apart from each other. In section 3.2 I discussed several modifications to Ferguson's original definition of diglossia (Kloss, 1966), and in particular Fishman's extension (1967). I showed how Fishman developed a four-fold model of diglossia that included structurally unrelated languages acting as H-and L-varieties, such as Spanish and Guaraní in Paraguay, or French and Russian in czarist Russia. Section 3.3 discussed the impact of Fishman's model on diglossic theory by discussing four case studies in which researchers (MacKinnon, 1984; Pauwels, 1986; Rindler-Schjerve and Vetter, 2003) applied and sometimes further modified Fishman's extension of diglossia. I also discussed in section 3.3 the critique of Fishman's model (Timm, 1981; Britto, 1986). I pointed out that some researchers (Dennison, 1971; Platt, 1977) consider both Ferguson's and Fishman's model as insufficient since many communities around the world (e.g. Singapore, Sauris [*die Zahre*]), employ language models with more than just two languages. Section 3.3 concluded with a discussion about the difficulty of measuring the structural relatedness between H and L. In section 3.4 I discussed the present state of diglossic research with

[135] Ferguson, however, did not invent the term diglossia. In his original paper he notes that "the French *diglossie* […] has been employed to this situation" (1996: 25) for some time before he published his article.

an emphasis on Hudson's (2002) article to develop a workable definition of diglossia. I showed that, in spite of Hudson's attempt, a uniform definition of the term is still lacking. Section 3.4 also discussed the reception of Hudson's article among other scholars and Hudson's rebuttal. Section 3.5 investigated the stability of diglossic speech communities and highlighted two opposite diglossic case studies from the German-speaking parts of Europe. One discussed the rise and spread of the L-variety (*Swiss German*) in German-speaking Switzerland, while the other showed the rise of the H-variety (*High German*) and the accompanying loss of L-varieties (dialect erosion) in Germany proper. Section 3.5 concluded with the fact that present-day diglossia in Germany is mainly to be found at the country's peripheries, i.e. certain regions in northern Germany and larger parts in southern Germany.

The loss of L-varieties in Germany, and in particular of Platt, has often given rise to the question where, when, and with whom Platt is still spoken. In fact, apart from descriptive analyses of the various Low German varieties, the question of the functional distribution of Platt is one of the main foci in the field of Low German research.[136] Functional distribution is also, as we have seen in this chapter, one of the most important features diagnostic of diglossia. The following chapter then investigates this diglossic feature, i.e. the functional distribution of Platt, in detail.

[136] Most of the descriptive studies discuss only one specific local dialect. Often conducted by locals themselves, their number is quite high. For more information, see Stellmacher (1995).

CHAPTER 4

THE FUNCTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLATT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview on the functional distribution of Platt, i.e. where, when and with whom it is spoken. In particular, this chapter focuses on the functional distribution of Ferguson's category "conversation with family, friends, colleagues" (1996: 28). I chose this category because, due to the erosion of L-varieties in Germany (see section 3.5.2), it represents the three diglossic sub-categories where usage of L is still regarded as predominant. This category also allowed me to contrast the GETAS results (1984) with my results (2003 survey). In fact, the comparison of my data with the GETAS results will show why the results of the 2003 survey are so important for Low German research in particular, and for diglossic theory in general.

In section 4.1 I discuss why the diglossic feature "functional distribution" is seen by many researchers as a key concept for identifying diglossic speech communities. Section 4.2 gives a brief overview of the functional distribution of Platt and Standard German during the 16th and 17th centuries, while section 4.3 discusses *Missingsch*, i.e. the blending of Platt and Standard German, which began in the 18th century and continues to this day. Section 4.4 provides a synopsis on the present functional distribution of Platt and Standard German in northern Germany. This section also discusses the methodology and goals of the GETAS study from 1984 and comments upon the controversy around the interpretation of its results. Section 4.5 then gives an overview of the GETAS results for the functional distribution of Platt among family, friends, and colleagues. Section 4.6

discusses the results from the 2003 survey for the same category, and in section 4.7 I present my conclusion. Finally, section 4.8 gives a summary of this chapter.

4.1 Functional Distribution

This section discusses why the functional distribution of H and L, also called functional complementarity, is regarded by many researchers as a key concept for defining diglossia. Ferguson lists function as his first rubric (see 3.1.1) for identifying diglossic speech communities and defines it as follows:

> One of the most important features of diglossia is the specialization of function for H and L. In one set of situations only H is appropriate and in another only L, with the two sets overlapping only very slightly. (1996: 27-28)

According to Ferguson, H and L are used almost exclusively in certain domains. To illustrate the functional distribution of these domains Ferguson provides a chart in his original paper which is shown in table 4.1:

Table 4.1: The Functional Distribution of H and L in Diglossia[137]

Domain	**H**	**L**
Sermon in church or mosque	X	
Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks		X
Personal letter	X	
Speech in parliament, political speech	X	
University lecture	X	
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues		X
News broadcast	X	
Radio 'soap opera'		X
Newspaper editorial, news story, caption on picture	X	
Caption on political cartoon		X
Poetry	X	
Folk literature		X

Table 4.1 clearly illustrates Ferguson's point that there is no or "very little" (Ferguson, 1996: 28) overlapping between the functional distribution of H and L. In fact, Ferguson states that using the wrong register in any social situation is regarded as a serious faux pas by other members of the speech community:

> An outsider who learns to speak fluent, accurate L and then uses it in a formal speech is an object of ridicule. A member of the speech community who uses H in a purely conversational situation or in an informal activity like shopping is equally an object of ridicule. (1996: 28)

Ferguson's original definition of function enjoys universal agreement among researchers, and many think that functional distribution is the main defining feature of diglossia. Fasold believes that "function is the most crucial criterion for diglossia" (1987:35), while Britto points out that agreement on the functional distribution of H and

[137] Ferguson (1996: 28).

L even unites followers of diglossia in the Fergusonian sense and practitioners of Fishman's Extension (see 3.2):

> Functional complementarity is the hallmark of diglossia, and is said to be the only rubric that underlies both Ferguson's concept and Fishman's extension of it. (1986: 12)

The clear functional division between H and L is commented on by both Fasold and Schiffman in their respective discussions on functional distribution in diglossic speech communities. Fasold, for example, points out that using the wrong register in any social situation is often regarded as unacceptable by other members of the speech community: "It is a serious social gaffe to use the wrong variety in an inappropriate situation" (1987: 35). Schiffman agrees and adds that such a faux pas would even be regarded as "ludicrous and outrageous" (1997: 206). Keller (1982) confirms the functional dichotomy of H and L by commenting on the impossibility to use H (here Standard German) in everyday situations in German-speaking Switzerland:

> It is psychologically impossible for any two Swiss of any class or occupation ever to address each other privately in anything but the Low-variety [i.e. Swiss German]. (1982: 81)

The overall agreement among researchers with regards to functional distribution being the main indicator of diglossia is summed up by Wardhaugh as follows:

> A key defining characteristic of diglossia is that the two varieties are kept quite apart in their functions. One is used in one set of circumstances and the other in an entirely different set. For example, the H varieties may be used for delivering sermons and formal lectures, especially in a parliament or legislative body, for giving political speeches, for broadcasting the news on radio and television, and for writing poetry, fine literature, and editorials in newspapers. In contrast, the L varieties may be used in giving instructions to workers, in low-prestige occupations or to household servants, in conversation with families, in 'soap operas' and popular programs on the radio, in captions on political cartoons in newspapers and in 'folk literature. (1986: 91)

In this section I gave a brief summary of how functional distribution in diglossia is defined and why it is considered to be the most important feature of diglossia. The following section examines the functional distribution of Platt in the 16th and 17th centuries and the domain changes it underwent during its development.

4.2 The Functional Distribution of Platt in the 16th/17th Century

As mentioned in sections 2.7 and 2.9, the middle period of Platt (Middle Low German) from the 13th to the 17th century is regarded as the Golden Age of Platt due to the political might and economic influence of the Hanseatic League. However, the term diglossia cannot be really applied to this period because Middle Low German was the only language spoken in northern Germany at this time.[138] Notwithstanding this fact, one could argue that due to its leading role within the Hanseatic League the Platt dialect of Lübeck served as H variety while other local varieties, for example the Platt spoken in Bremen or Kiel, served as L varieties. Suffice it to say here that Platt in its middle

[138] For more information on the MLG speech area see Stellmacher (1990: 40-41).

period, in one form or the other, fulfilled all the functions of an H variety, i.e. it was the language of business, religion, literature, law, and education.[139]

It was thus not until the decline of the Hanseatic League and the ensuing spread of High German in the North that one can talk of a diglossic situation in this area. As shown in section 2.9, one cannot pinpoint the decline of Platt in northern Germany to one singular event. Rather, it was a series of developments, among them the economic downslide of the Hanseatic League, the spread of Martin Luther's *Bibeldeutsch* (Bible German) which was largely based on (East) Early New High German, the switch of the northern German chanceries from Middle Low German to Early New High German[140], and the gradual rejection of Platt by the upper classes in the North, that led to a diglossic situation all over northern Germany with High German serving as the new H variety and Low German being relegated to fulfill the L variety.

The following table, based on Stellmacher's (1990) and Sanders' (1987) work on Middle Low German (see chapter 2.7/2.8), shows its functional distribution during the so-called *Übergangszeit* (transition period) from MLG to ENHG in the 16th and early 17th century. The table uses most of Ferguson's original domains excluding the modern ones like radio and television news.

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[139] The City Law of Lübeck was at one point (ca.15th century) so influential that it virtually served as a model for law codes in many other Hanseatic cities. For more information, see Dollinger (1964).

[140] Recall that Middle High German and Middle Low German are historically not parallel developments. The Middle High German period was from ca. 1050-1350, while the classical period of Middle Low German was between ca. 1350-1550. The period after 1350 is called Early New High German (1350-1600), while the written standard form of Low German splintered into numerous local dialects after 1650.

Table 4.2: The Functional Distribution of Platt in the 16th/17th century ("transition period")

Domain	H (Early New High German)	L (Middle Low German)
Sermon in church	X	X
Instructions to servants, clerks, workmen		X
Personal letter	X	X
Political speech, parliament	X	x (at local level)
Schools, University	X	x (elementary schools in rural areas)
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues		X
Poetry	X	X
Folk literature		X

This table shows that - contrary to Ferguson's chart - there was considerable overlapping between MLG and ENHG in the individual domains during this period, i.e. High German only gradually gained its status as H variety in the North. For instance, there existed translations of the Bible in Low German, the most famous one was the so-called *Bugenhagenbibel* from 1534.[141] It was not until 1590/91 that the first church books in High German were published in Hamburg and Lübeck. Low German also continued to be a medium for written communication as the many personal letters prove that are preserved from this time.[142] The choice of language in political life was largely dominated by the writers of the chanceries. Since the chanceries were one of the first public offices in the North to switch to High German, the many different governments at

[141] Luther asked his friend and fellow theologian Johannes Bugenhagen, a native of Pomerania, to translate the Bible into Low German. Ironically, Bugenhagen's translation caused more harm than good, allegedly because of the many mistakes his translation included. For more information, see Stellmacher (1990: 74), and Sanders (1987: 162).
[142] For sources, see Stellmacher (1990: 78-79).

that time (e.g. dukedoms, counties, [*Grafschaften*], independent cities etc.) followed suit.[143] At the local level, however, Low German continued to be used as the language of political discourse. In fact, this chapter discusses a community in the *Grafschaft Bentheim* where political discourse, one of the most characteristic H domains, is still carried out only in L (i.e. Platt). The language of education underwent a similar transformation. While Low German was never used as language of instruction at universities, it continued for a long time to be the sole language of instruction at elementary schools in rural areas. For example, several of my participants reported that when they started school in the 1950s and 1960s, Low German was still employed as the language of instruction for the first two years before gradually switching to High German. This was, however, mainly done to ease the transition from the language at home (Platt) to the language of school (Standard German). Finally, with regards to poetry and fine literature, both MLG and ENHG produced a number of remarkable authors and works. Authors such as Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523), Hans Sachs (1494-1576), and Martin Luther (1483-1546) composed important works in ENHG, while MLG was characterized by famous morality plays, such as *Des dodes dantz* (Der Lübecker Totentanz/ The Death Dance of Lübeck) from 1489, and the famous fable *Reineke de Vos* (Reinecke der Fuchs/ Reinecke the fox) first published in 1498.[144]

The gradual encroachment of High German on Low German domains in the 16th and 17th centuries was commented on by several contemporaries. For example, Georg

[143] For more information, see Stellmacher (1990: 70).
[144] The popularity of this fable in Germany was such that it later served as source for Goethe's "Reinecke Fuchs" written almost three hundred years later in 1794. For more information, see Frenzel + Frenzel (1978: 264).

Torquatus, a pastor in Magdeburg (present-day Sachsen Anhalt) in the 1560s and 1570s, reported that church life was dominated by High German:

> Es herrscht nun allerorts die Meißnische [High German] Sprache, während nicht lange vor unserer Zeit die sächsische Sprache [Platt] die Vorherrschaft behauptet hat.[145] (Sanders, 1987: 154)

This statement by Torquatus is not surprising if one considers the almost immediate acceptance of Protestantism in the North, which had as consequence that the quite influential domain of religion was among the first ones to yield to High German (see also section 2.9). Indeed, because of the relatively quick conversion of northern Germany to Protestantism (16th century), Martin Luther's Bible translation had a much more profound effect on Platt than it had on other German dialects.[146] Stellmacher (1990) describes the reverence the reformer enjoyed in the North in the centuries following the Reformation:

> Es verwundert nicht, daß im protestantischen Norddeutschland das Lutherwort als nahezu unantastbar galt.[147] (1990: 72).

Bellmann (1975) even characterizes the religious situation in northern Germany during this time with a "Gleichsetzung des Wort Gottes mit dem Luther-Text" (Bellmann, 1975:

[145] "The Meißnisch language is spoken everywhere now, while not long before our time the Saxon language had the upper hand" - my translation.
[146] It should be pointed out that Latin, and not German, remained the language of the religious domain in Germany's Catholic South until well into the 18th century.
[147] "It is not surprising that Luther's words were considered as almost unimpeachable in the Protestant North." - my translation.

8).[148] In fact, Ferguson explains the attractiveness of a text like Luther's Bible translation as a possible reason for the creation of a diglossic situation:

> Diglossia is likely to come into being when […] there is a sizeable body of literature in a language closely related to (or even identical with) the natural language of the community, and this literature embodies, whether as a source (e.g. divine relevation) or reinforcement, some of the fundamental values of the community. (1996: 36)

Another development, simultaneous to the loss of the religious domain, is commented on by Nathan Chytraeus, a university professor in Rostock (northeast Germany) in the 1580s, who complained about the stigmatization of Low German by the educated classes as being backward and uncouth:

> [Diese Menschen] verbringen den größten Teil ihrer Jugend-und Mannesjahre damit, fremde Sprachen zu erlernen und zu üben, gleichzeitig aber die eigene Muttersprache [i.e.Platt] entweder gar nicht zu kennen oder sich wenigstens nicht zu schämen, sie als roh, unkultiviert und unvollkommen beiseite zu lassen.[149] (Sanders, 1987: 155)

Chytraeus does not directly comment on a loss of a specific domain of Low German, rather he points out that the nature of one of Ferguson's original rubrics of diglossia, that of prestige (rubric 2 in Ferguson's original paper), was affected in a negative way at around the same time Low German began to compete for domains with High German. Chytraeus' comments illustrate the outcome of this process, i.e. former speakers of Low German, and especially younger and more educated members of Low German speech communities, display a disdain for Low German and favor foreign languages instead. A

[148] "The equivalence of God's words with Luther's text" - my translation.
[149] "These people spend the largest part of their youth and adulthood with learning and studying foreign languages, while at the same time they either don't know their own mother tongue or they are not ashamed to call it crude, uncouth, and imperfect" - my translation.

decline of prestige of one variety is, according to Hudson (2002), associated with the "social origins of diglossia" (2002: 21) and often happens "in circumstances where cultural-linguistic traditions develop or acquire new registers" (2002: 21). Hudson (2002) also points out that speakers of the new variety (in this case Early New High German) can often become new "prestige role models" (2002: 21) and "thereby provide the social motivation for language or dialect shift" (2002: 21). Hudson (2002) concludes that certain circumstances have the potential to cause this kind of socially related language change, among them one that characterizes the relationship between High German and Low German before the 15th century:

> The H-variety in question historically has never been used as a vernacular by any native speakers. (2002: 21).

Based on table 4.2 and its discussion, one can summarize the distribution of domains in northern Germany toward the end of the 17th century as follows: Before the 15th century Early New High German was spoken and written mainly outside the northern German speech community, where Low German (or rather Middle Low German) occupied all the domains of an H variety. Through a series of economic, religious, and political developments in the 16th and 17th century, Early New High German starts to gradually replace Middle Low German and emerges as the new H variety in the North. By the end of the 17th century the new H and L varieties (Early New High German and Middle Low German respectively) are in competition with regards to the functional

distribution of certain domains, i.e. both H and L are used for the same domain (see table 4.2)[150].

Ferguson argues in his original 1959 paper that the "specialization of function for H and L" is quite clear "with the two sets overlapping only very slightly" (1996:27-28). He also points out that a considerable amount of time, "of the order of several centuries" (1996: 36), may pass before a diglossic speech community is eventually established. The competition for the same functional niche between Platt and ENHG in the 16th and 17th century makes it debatable whether the linguistic situation in northern Germany at this time can be called purely diglossic, since it clearly violates the strict dichotomy of the H and L distribution characteristic of diglossia. It would be more appropriate to call this specific situation the end of the *Übergangszeit* (transition period)[151], or the beginning of pure diglossia. On the other hand, this development is a good indicator of how diglossia comes into being, i.e. it clearly illustrates the simultaneous decline of one variety of a language and the rise of another one. The duration of this process, i.e. several centuries, is quite evidently in accordance with Ferguson's theory.

Finally, similar to the process of dialect erosion in many other parts of Germany (see section 3.5.2), it must be pointed out that the reversal of the functional distribution of H and L as witnessed in the case of Early New High German and Middle Low German, runs contrary to Ferguson's original idea about the stability of diglossic speech

[150] By then Early New High German was replaced by New High German (ca. 1600 - 1800). For more information, see Waterman (1991: 137-163).
[151] The term *Übergangszeit* is not meant to describe possible changes that the MLG underwent; rather it serves to denote the waning status of Low German by gradually losing functional domains to High German, i.e. a process that ends with its reversal from H into L. For more information, see Stellmacher (1990: 69-89).

communities. In fact, the further fate of Platt (loss of almost all domains to H with no regain, see sections 2.9 and 3.5.2) proves that Ferguson's pattern of L being able to gain domains from H in the circle of the "lifetime" of a diglossic speech community does not always hold true. At the same time, however, this development illustrates the unique place that Low German occupies within diglossic theory.

In this section I discussed the functional distribution of Platt and Early New High German during the 16th and 17th century in northern Germany. I showed that Platt fulfilled all the functions of a typical H variety before this time during the heyday of the Hanseatic League. I discussed the reasons why Early New High German started to compete with Middle Low German in various functional domains (e.g. religion) during this time, and the subsequent decline of prestige of Low German's at around the same time. This section also illustrated the overlapping domains between Middle Low German and Early New High German, such as poetry and church life, as a necessary pre-condition for the creation of pure diglossia. Before I discuss the present functional distribution of Platt, I will now point out in the following section a particular phenomenon characteristic of transition periods from one variety to the other, namely the blending of the H and L varieties by speakers of L in an attempt to emulate the H variety.

4.3 Missingsch

As Nathan Chytraeus reported, many members of the educated classes in the North began to resent Platt during the 16/17th centuries as being backward. Especially students, who studied at such universities as Wittenberg, Erfurt, and Leipzig (all in the

present-day south-east of Germany; in Sachsen-Anhalt, Thuringia, and Saxony respectively), started to imitate the High German language of this area, known as *Meißnisch*.[152] This trend in turn was imitated by the middle classes of the North, and eventually led to the establishment of *Missingsch*, a mixture of High and Low German in the North.[153] Sanders (1987) characterizes this language as a "naiv-unvollkommener Drang zum Hochdeutschen" (*a naïve-imperfect urge toward High German"- my translation,* Sanders, 1987:167). The introduction of this language was based on the acceptance and embrace of High German as being superior to Platt by the formerly Low German-speaking middle- and upper classes. Ironically, however, the eagerness to learn the new language led to many unintended grammatical mistakes, since Platt still served as a substrate for *Missingsch*. The author Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935) gives an affectionate definition of *Missingsch* in his novel *Schloß Gripsholm* (1931):

> Missingsch ist das, was herauskommt, wenn ein Plattdeutscher hochdeutsch sprechen will. Er krabbelt auf der glatt gebohnerten Treppe der deutschen Grammatik empor und rutscht alle Nase lang wieder in sein geliebtes Plattdeutsch zurück. (Schloß Gripsholm, 11-12)[154]

[152] Meißnisch belonged to the East High German group and was based on the language of the Saxon courts and chanceries (see also 2.9).

[153] The etymology of this term is unclear. The two most common explanations are that it is either the Low German word for *Meißnish*, or a contraction of the word *Mischsprache* (mixed language). For more information, see Sanders (1987: 168-169).

[154] "Missingsch is that what comes out when a Low German speaker wants to speak High German. He crawls up on the clean-waxed steps of German grammar and falls back into his beloved Platt all the time -" - my translation. There are textual examples of Missingsch abound in German literature. The most famous, next to Tucholsky's character Lydia in *Schloß Gripsholm*, is Fritz Reuter's novel *Ut mine Stromtid* (1859/1864).

Dingeldein (2002) defines the term as follows:

> Missingsch ist gekennzeichnet durch die Realisierung standard-sprachlicher Phonemsysteme auf niederdeutscher Artikulationsbasis bei teilweiser Beibehaltung der niederdeutschen Morphologie und Syntax. Wird von den Sprechern als "Hochdeutsch" und nicht als eigene Varietät angesehen. (Dingeldein, 2002: 455).[155]

The establishment of a new, High German-based language, however synthesized or simplified, in the North shows the readiness with which Low German was abandoned toward the end of the transition period. This development continued throughout the 19th century. Its outcome, i.e. the present-day functional distribution of Low German, is illustrated in the following section.

4.4 The Present Functional Distribution of Platt

Besides the further erosion of Platt, the second half of the 20th century saw the influx of millions of refugees from former East-German areas (Pomerania, Silesia, East-Prussia, etc.) after World War II. It is estimated that about 1.5 million refugees found a new home in Lower Saxony alone (see also 2.11.1). This rise in population affected the High German/Low German language situation in the North even further since almost all

[155] "Missingsch is characterized by the realization of the phoneme systems of the standard speech on a Low German articulation basis. Low German morphology and syntax are partly preserved. [Missingsch] is regarded by its speakers as "High German" and not as an independent variety." - my translation. The blending of H and L varieties is not restricted to Missingsch or to the German-speaking countries of Europe. The so-called *Ruhrdeutsch* (spoken in the Ruhr area of Germany) exhibits similar features with High German as H variety and Westfalian (the original Low German dialect of the area) as L variety. An example of *Ruhrdeutsch* would be the sentence “Gib mich dat!” (Standard German: “Gib mir das!”/Engl.: “Give me that!”), which clearly shows the phonological and grammatical Low German basis of this language. In Southern France, the variety of French spoken is called *Francitan*, which makes reference to its mixture of an *Occitan* substrate and a Standard French High variety.

of the refugees did not speak nor understand Platt.[156] Based on the GETAS-study, the only significant survey of Platt in the last decades from 1984 (see also 2.10), the most recent functional distribution of High German and Low German is shown in table 4.3. The table uses again Ferguson's original domains (see section 4.1), this time including modern ones like radio and TV:

Table 4.3: The Present Functional Distribution of Platt in northern Germany

Domain	**H (High German)**	**L (Low German)**
Sermon in church	X	(x)[157]
Instructions/conversations with workmen, clerks, waiters etc.	X	(x)
Personal letter	X	
Speech in parliament, political speech	X	
University lecture	X	
Conversation with family, friends, colleagues	X	X
News broadcast	X	
Radio	X	(x)
Newspapers	X	(x)
Poetry	X	
Folk literature	X	X

[156] A field study on the fate of Platt from the mid-eighties in the county of Lüneburg (northeastern Lower Saxony) concluded that Platt had effectively died out there due to the enormous influx of refugees. For more information, see Erdmann (1992).
[157] Marks in parentheses denote a limited or very limited amount of Platt in the particular domain.

Table 4.3 illustrates the further loss of domains of Platt within a span of roughly 300 years (from ca. the end of the 17th century until roughly the end of the 20th century). In fact, there is now not a single domain left that is occupied by Platt only, e.g. it shares its two strongest domains - conversation with family, friends, colleagues; and folk literature - with Standard German. In Ferguson's original model, however, five of the twelve domains (instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks; conversation with family, friends, colleagues; radio 'soap opera'; caption on political cartoons; folk literature) are occupied by the L-variety only and contain no overlap with the H-variety (1996: 28)[158]. The loss of the poetry/literature domain to Standard German is arguably the one with the gravest consequences since it reduced Low German to a spoken variety. The present-day absence of a common orthography for Low German, which further erodes its status as a written language, can also be attributed to this loss of the poetry/literature domain. While Middle Low German still had a rich literature until the 16th century(see section 4.2), there have not since then been any nationally known authors writing in Low German.[159] In fact, all of the major German literature movements and

[158] In my table I left out the domain of "Caption on political cartoon", since this represents a rather small and insignificant domain in Germany (although political cartoons are usually in the H-variety). Likewise, I broadened Ferguson's domain of "Radio soap opera" to "Radio" in general since "soap operas" are quite uncommon on German radio.

[159] The last Low German authors who enjoyed fame beyond the Low German speech area were Fritz Reuter (1810-1874), Theodor Storm (1817-1888), and Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908), although the latter two wrote predominantly in Standard German.

works of the twentieth century are virtually devoid of any usage of Low German.[160] There are, to be sure, still occasional or even regular Low German publications at a local level. However, these are usually limited to a one-page column in a regional newspaper or little booklets that are often characterized by a lack of literary substance or take on the form of *dönken* ("funny short stories").

The loss of Low German domains is commented on by several researchers (Stellmacher, 1987; Wirrer, 2000), who confirm that by now the use of Platt is mainly reduced to the domain of family and friends. Wirrer characterizes the present functional distribution of Platt in northern Germany as follows:

> Heute ist das Niederdeutsche vor allem eine Sprache der Mündlichkeit und beschränkt sich im Wesentlichen auf den Nahbereich von Familie, Freundes-und Bekanntenkreis sowie die Nachbarschaft. Als Arbeitssprache findet das Niederdeutsche vor allem im Handwerk, beim Fischfang und in der Landwirtschaft Verwendung.[161] (2000: 137)

Stellmacher agrees, and points out that the current functional distribution is both the result of the spread of Standard German in the 16th and 17th century in the North (see section 4.2) as well as the decline of prestige of Low German:

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[160] A possible exception to this is Thomas Mann's famous novel "*Die Buddenbrooks*" (1901), for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1929. The novel takes place in Mann's home town Lübeck and contains both Low German-speaking characters as well as occasional Low German words and phrases. For more information, see Frenzel + Frenzel (1979: 506-507).

[161] "Today Low German is mostly an oral phenomenon and is mainly limited to the domain of family, friends and acquaintances, as well as the neighborhood. As a language of work Low German is mostly spoken by craftsmen, fishers and in agriculture." - my translation.

> An der Verdrängung des Niederdeutschen durch die sich immer stärker ausbreitende hochdeutsche Sprache im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert hat die Sprachgeschichte die Ersetzung von Niederdeutsch durch Hochdeutsch in den einzelnen Domänen verfolgt. In Bildung und Erziehung, Beruf und Religion, Familie und Freundschaft verliert die einheimische Sprache seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters immer stärker an Geltung und erfährt dadurch einen Ansehensverlust.[162] (1987: 37)

The GETAS study from 1984 partly confirms Wirrer's and Stellmacher's comments. However, before I present some of the GETAS results, a general disclaimer regarding this survey is in order (see also 2.10). The GETAS ("Gesellschaft für angewandte Sozialpsychologie" - *Center for Applied Social psychology*), situated in Bremen, surveyed 2.000 Platt-speakers and non-speakers in 400 different locations in the old federal German states Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, and Bremen in the summer of 1984. Participants were chosen at random. Each participant took part in an interview session, conducted by more than 150 GETAS volunteers, that lasted approximately sixty minutes. The questionnaire for the participants was created by professors for Low German from the universities of Hamburg, Kiel, Münster, and Göttingen (each of these universities has an "Institut für Niederdeutsche Sprache" – *Institute for Low German Language*) under the supervision of Dieter Stellmacher. 54% of the participants were female, and 46% male. 39% were between 18-39 years at the time of the interview, 34% of the participants were between 40-59 years old, and 27% were over 60 years old. However, in spite of this large-scale

[162] "With the decline of Low German and the spread of the High German language in the 16th and 17th century, linguists have pointed out the substitution of Low German with High German in several domains. Since the end of the Middle Ages the native language [Platt] has been losing ground in education and raising children, the workplace and religion, family and friendship, and thus has also suffered a decline in prestige". - my translation.

survey, the publication of the results has been lacking somewhat in effort. It took, for example, a full three years before partial results were made available to the public. A complete overview of all results does not exist up to this day, nor has it ever been digitized.[163] Furthermore, the results which are available have been the subject of much controversy because it has been claimed (Menge, 1997; Wirrer, 1998) that the interpretation of the GETAS results was too positive and even methodologically erroneous (Wirrer, 1998). These reproaches focus mainly on the number of Platt-speakers the interpreters (Stellmacher et al.) arrived at. Since the questionnaires for the GETAS survey relied on self-evaluation in terms of language competence, an astonishing 56% of the informants claimed to speak Platt. However, these numbers included those informants who stated to speak it "ein wenig" (*a little*). Stellmacher (1987) translated these percentage points into 8.96 million Platt speakers for the five German states, while the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper even spoke of 10 million speakers in 1996. Menge (1997: 32) called this number a "Superzahl" (*super number*), while Wirrer (1998: 310) pointed out that the basic premise of this study contained "schwerwiegende methodische Fehler" (*grave methodological errors*).[164] Menge (1987: 32) later relativized the number of Platt speakers and came to considerably lower results, namely that in 1984 roughly 2.5 million speakers spoke Platt in the old Federal states.[165] The confusion surrounding the interpretation of the GETAS study has led to diametrically

[163] Partial results are available in Stellmacher's "Wer spricht Platt?" (*Who speaks Platt*, 1987), and "Niedersächsischer Dialektzensus" (*Dialect census for Lower Saxony*, 1995).
[164] This refers to the fact that neither foreign-born citizens nor people under 18 were surveyed, but these population segments were later included in the overall picture. For more information, see Menge (1997: 30-45), and Wirrer (1998: 308-339).
[165] The number of Platt speakers for 2005 is unknown.

opposed conclusions. Stellmacher, who designed the questionnaires and evaluated them with a team of volunteers, (1987) proclaims:

> Niederdeutsch ist nicht tot, die Sprache lebt und […] sie hat in den letzten zwanzig Jahren keineswegs an Boden verloren. [166](1987: 44)

Wirrer (1998), however, disagrees and questions the validity of the results altogether claiming a "Verzerrung der Zahlen" (*distortion of figures*, 1998: 311). With this disclaimer in mind I present in the following section some of the GETAS results that pertain to the functional distribution of Platt.

4.5 Conversation with Family, Friends, and Colleagues - The GETAS Results from 1984

The domain where Platt (or, indeed, any L-variety) is thought to be still strongly represented (see Stellmacher, 1987; Wirrer, 2000) is Ferguson's sixth domain "Conversation with family, friends, and colleagues". This section discusses the GETAS results for the functional distribution of Low German and Standard German for these three groups. Fortunately, most results of the GETAS study for this domain are available to us.

Ferguson (1996: 28) places all three categories of this domain (family, friends,colleagues) firmly into the L-variety. The results of the GETAS study, however, show that not all three categories can be placed into the same (i.e. Low German) domain.

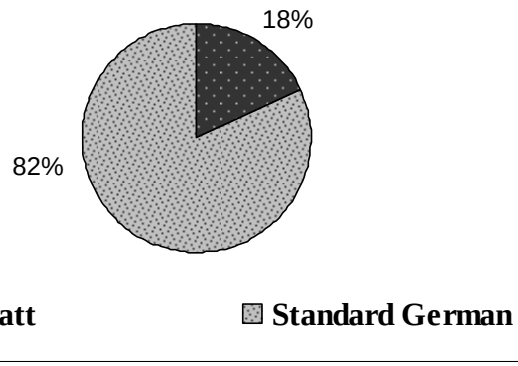
[166] "Low German is not dead, the language is alive and has absolutely not been losing ground in the last twenty years." - my translation.

I therefore present the results for each group in different sections. Section 4.5.1 shows the functional distribution of the category "family".

4.5.1 The Functional Distribution between Standard German and Low German for the Category "Conversations with family" (GETAS Results, 1984)

The GETAS results for this category include three groups: siblings, children and grandparents. Figure 4.5.1a features the functional distribution for conversations between siblings[167]:

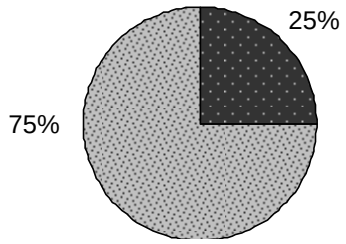
Figure 4.5.1a
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Siblings
(GETAS results 1984)



[167] The GETAS evaluation was mainly concerned with results about locations, i.e. where Platt is still spoken or not spoken anymore. Therefore, the usual division of the results into gender, age, and social status was mostly absent in the publication of the GETAS results. For this reason, the figures I present here do not include a breakdown into different categories, such as gender or age.

The relatively low number of Platt speakers who use Platt with their siblings (18%) illustrates that this group does not fall into the L-domain as Ferguson suggests. This number, however, increases slightly when other Platt speakers are present as figure 4.5.1b shows:

Figure 4.5.1b
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Siblings if other Platt speakers are present
(GETAS results 1984)

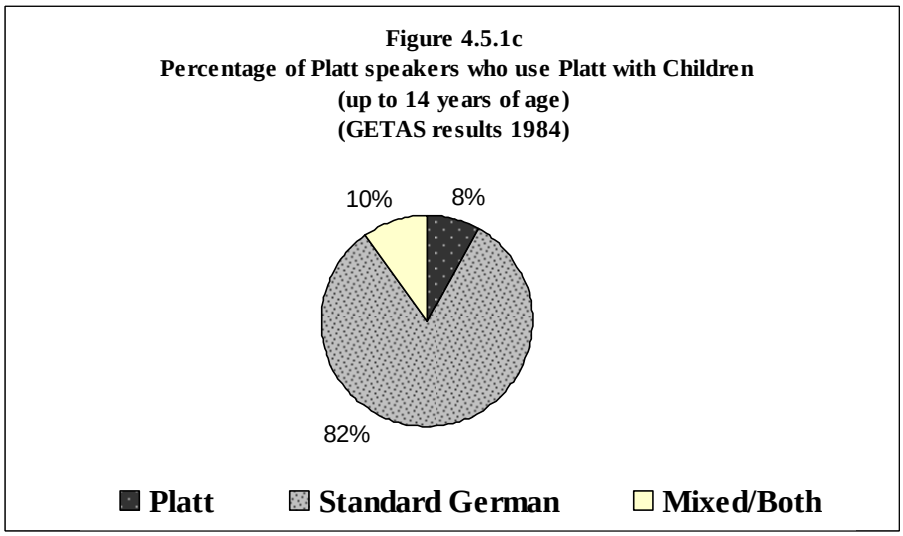


Platt **Standard German**

While figure 5.4.1b shows that the language of choice between siblings is clearly Standard German, an even lower number of Platt-speakers - between 6% and 10% - use the language with young children as illustrated in figure 5.4.1c:[168]

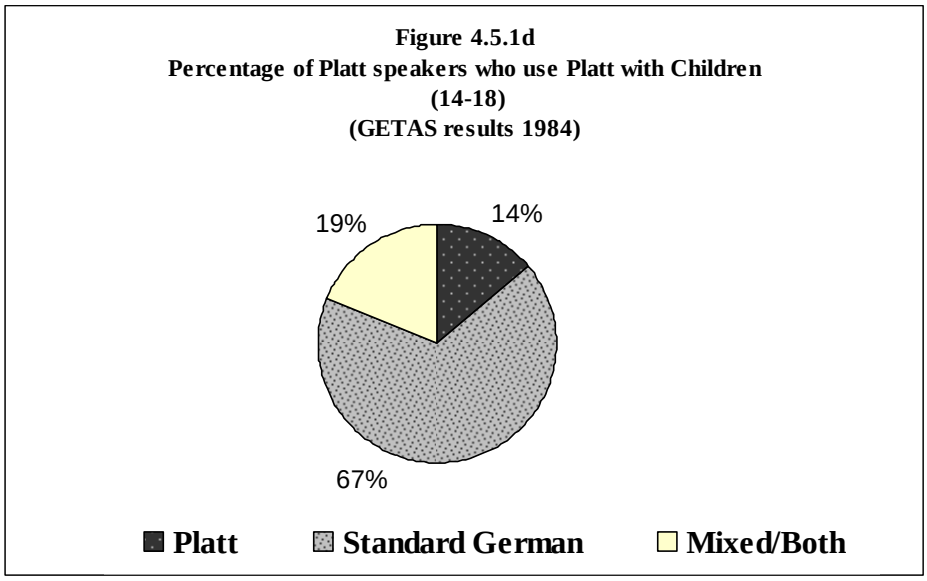
[168] Wirrer mentions 6-10% of all Platt-speaking parents who speak Platt with their children, and states that 10-14% of all Platt-speaking parents speak Platt with older children (14-18). I used the highest figures for both figure 5.4.1c and figure 5.4.1d. For more information, see Wirrer (1998: 310).

Figure 4.5.1c
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Children
(up to 14 years of age)
(GETAS results 1984)



The high number of Platt speakers who use Standard German only with their children (82%) is somewhat reduced once the children are above the age of fourteen as shown in figure 4.5.1d:

Figure 4.5.1d
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Children
(14-18)
(GETAS results 1984)



A common reason for using the H-variety with young children is the parents' fear that their children will not learn the standard language correctly or perform poorly in school if they are raised mainly in the L-variety. This was, for instance, the main reason given by dialect speakers in the village of Erp (southwest of Cologne), who were surveyed between 1971 and 1974.[169] The following statement from a dialect speaker who participated in this project is representative of this belief:

> Meine Frau ist schwanger und im Juli erwarten wir ein Kind, da werd' ich Hochdeutsch mit reden […] Die Anforderungen an die Kinder sind heute so groß, also wer heute nicht astrein Hochdeutsch spricht - eh, der hat es nachher auf weiterführenden Schulen bestimmt schwer und auch im Beruf.[170] (Besch et al., 1983: 80)

Another dialect speaker of this project expresses even stronger sentiments when it comes to the question of speaking Platt with children:

> Also, ich seh es ja immer etwas als Vergewaltigung an der Kinder, wenn ich mit meiner Frau Platt rede, sofort schwenkt man um auf Hochdeutsch und spricht jetzt Hochdeutsch.[171] (Besch et al., 1983: 84)

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[169] The interviewers of this project chose - for reasons not entirely comprehensible - to survey only a segment of the male population of this village and disregarded females altogether. For this reason, I do not use data from this project. I do, however, in the course of this work occasionally include quotes from participants of this project with regards to language beliefs and language attitudes. For more information, see Besch et al. (1983)

[170] "My wife is pregnant and in July we are expecting a child. I am going to speak High German with the child. The expectations for children are nowadays so big, so whoever doesn't speak perfect High German these days - uh, that person will certainly have problems in higher education and also on the job." - my translation.

[171] "Well, I see it a bit as a rape of the children when I talk Platt with my wife. Immediately I change to High German, and now speak High German only." - my translation.

The parents' fear that their children will not learn the H-variety correctly is often coupled with unpleasant memories of their own school years when many dialect speakers essentially had to learn High German as a foreign language. The common assumption here is that speaking High German only with children thus will save them from similar difficulties in school. The following quote is an example for this reasoning:

> Ich sprech' Hochdeutsch mit meinen Kindern, aus dem ganz einfachen Grund, weil ich selbst am eigenen Leib erfahren habe, wie schwer es für jemand ist, der Dialekt spricht, sich nachher mi'm Hochdeutschen zurechtzufinden.[172] (Besch at al, 1983: 80)

Stellmacher concludes that parents in general do not want to interfere with the public schools' exclusive use of the H-variety:

> Hier wird offensichtlich der nahkommunikative Bereich durch die Erziehungs-und Schulkommunikation verändert - eine Beobachtung, die nicht nur in Bezug aufs Niederdeutsche gilt.[173] (1990: 101).

Wirrer (1998) believes that the failure of Platt speakers to pass the language on to the next generation constitutes the single, most alarming result of the GETAS study, since the future of a language usually depends on the number of younger speakers. Wirrer also thinks that the number of young Platt speakers has further decreased since the carrying out of the GETAS study:

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[172] I speak High German with my children, for the simple reason that I have personally experienced how difficult it is for someone who speaks dialect to find his way later in High German". - my translation.

[173] " It is obvious that this communicative domain [conversation with children] is changed by the communication at schools and in education - an observation that is not only valid for Low German." - my translation.

> Die Tatsache, daß seit der GETAS-Umfrage bereits 14 Jahre [*sic*] vergangen sind,gibt darüber hinaus zu der Vermutung Anlass, daß die Zahl der Kinder und Jugendlichen, die das Niederdeutsche - sei es als Erstsprache, sei es als Zweitsprache - vermittels des ungesteuerten Spracherwerbs erlernen, weiter gesunken ist. [174] (1998: 310)

As for the third group in this category, grandparents, Stellmacher (1987) reports in his interpretation of the GETAS results that within the family this group is the most common addressee for Platt, although he does not state any exact numbers:

> In der Familie sind es die Großeltern, mit denen man am häufigsten Platt spricht.[175] (1987: 32)

In this section I discussed the functional distribution between Low German and Standard German for Ferguson's category "conversation with family". I showed that not all of the GETAS results for this category fall into the L-domain, and that Standard German now has largely replaced Low German as the dominant language for conversations among family members. These results also cast doubt on the common assumption that the family is one of the last refuges where Platt is frequently spoken, as Wirrer (2000:137) points out (see quote in section 4.4). Only one segment of this category, conversation with grandparents, falls firmly into the L-domain, while conversations with children and between siblings belong to the H-domain. In summary, the oldest generation is the most preferred addressee for the L-variety, while the youngest generation is the most preferred one for the H-variety. The following section continues

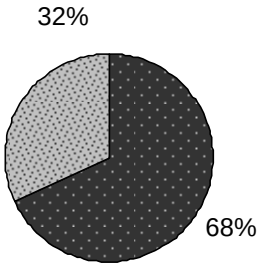
[174] "The fact that already 14 years have passed since the GETAS study, gives further rise to the assumption that the number of children and adolescents who learn Low German from their parents - be it as a first language, be it as a second language - has further decreased." - my translation.
[175] "Within the family one speaks most often Platt with the grandparents." - my translation.

with GETAS results and discusses the second group of Ferguson's domain, namely conversations with friends.

4.5.2 The Functional Distribution between Standard German and Low German for the Category "Conversations with Friends" (GETAS Results, 1984)

The results of the GETAS survey for this category show that, unlike conversations with family members, conversations with friends does fall mainly into the L-domain as is illustrated in figure 4.5.2a:

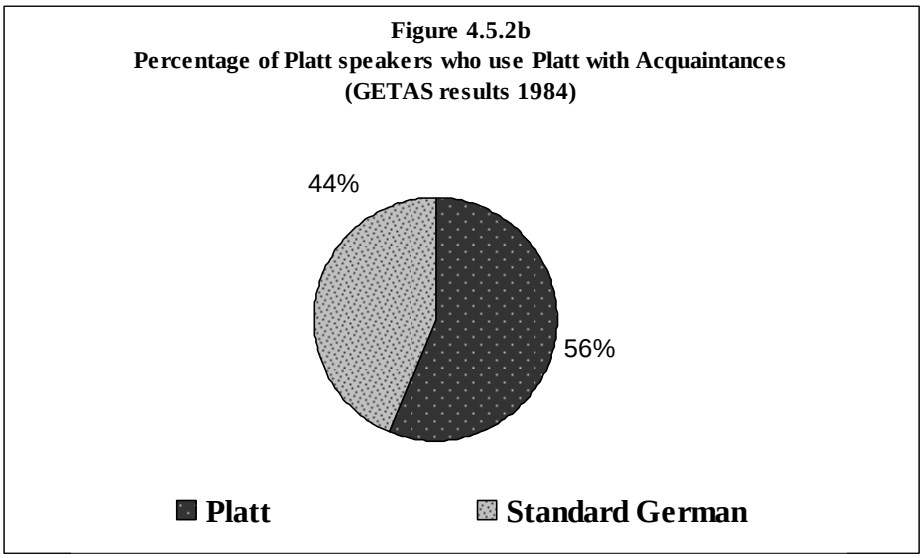
Figure 4.5.2a
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Friends
(GETAS results 1984)



Platt **Standard German**

Figure 4.5.2a shows that Platt seems to dominate in conversations between friends with 68% choosing Platt as the preferred language. A similarly high number of Platt speakers (56%) use it for conversations with acquaintances as can be seen in chart 4.5.2b:

Figure 4.5.2b
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Acquaintances
(GETAS results 1984)



Stellmacher comments on the discrepancy of the GETAS results for the categories "conversation with family" and "conversation with friends":

> Auf Fragen, mit wem […] man Niederdeutsch spreche, ergeben sich ganz klare Verteilungen: es sind zuerst Gesprächspartner, von denen man weiß, daß sie Niederdeutsch sprechen und diese Sprache lieben, also Freunde und gute Bekannte. Sehr zurück hält man seine niederdeutschen Sprachkenntnisse im Gespräch mit Kindern und Enkeln, besonders solange diese schulpflichtig sind. [176](1990: 101)

[176] "There are very clear distinctions with regards to the question with whom one speaks Low German. r is first and foremost conversation partners of whom one knows that they speak Low German and that they love this language, thus with friends and good acquaintances. People are very reserved with their knowledge of Low German in conversations with children and grandchildren, especially if they are still going to school." - my translation.

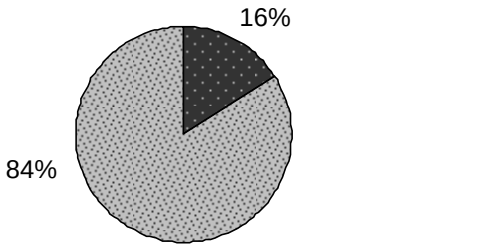
Stellmacher thus clearly confirms the point that the L-speakers of the GETAS survey mainly reserve their knowledge of Platt for older speakers who are not family members.

In this section I showed that the GETAS results for Ferguson's second category of his domain "conversation with family, friends, and colleagues" are in accordance with Ferguson's placement of this category into the L-variety, i.e. conversation with friends are mostly carried out in the L-variety. The following section discusses Ferguson's third category "conversation with colleagues".

4.5.3 The Functional Distribution between StandardGerman and Low German for the Category "Conversation with Colleagues" (GETAS Results, 1984)

The GETAS results for this category, similar to the category “conversation with family”, are not in accordance with Ferguson’s placement of it into the L-variety as is shown in figure 4.5.3:

Figure 4.5.3
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt at Work
(GETAS results 1984)



Platt **Standard German**

Figure 4.5.3 illustrates that Standard German dominates at work and is the preferred language on the job. The question whether the H or the L variety is the dominant language at work has actually two answers in diglossic theory. While "conversation with colleagues" might be carried out in the L-variety, Schiffman (1997:205-206) points out that any "formal" act at work (conversations with superiors, conferences, announcements, etc.[177]) falls into the H category.[178] Indeed, 88% of the GETAS informants stated that they would prefer High German in formal situations at work, such as job interviews or job presentations. The GETAS survey did not ask specifically about the choice of language among colleagues. However, the overall low number of Platt speakers who use

[177] Examples provided by the author.
[178] To this one might add the increasing use of modern media (email, internet) at the workplace which is almost 100% carried out in the H variety (here Standard German).

Platt at work indicates that the category "conversations with colleagues" belongs to the H-domain.

To summarize: In the previous three sub-sections I have shown that the GETAS results for Ferguson's domain "conversation with family, friends and colleagues" clearly demonstrate a split of categories, i.e. not all three of them fall firmly into the L-domain. Only one of them, conversations with friends, can be safely placed into the L-domain. Within the family both the L-variety and the H-variety are used depending largely on the conversation partner, with grandparents being the most preferred addressees for the L-variety and younger children the least preferred ones. Finally, the language at work seems to fall mostly into the H-domain with more than two thirds of the informants stating that they use Standard German on the job. These results then on the one hand confirm the fact that Platt is not spoken at work anymore, and on the other hand make it erroneous to conclude (Stellmacher 1990, Wirrer 2000), that Platt is mostly spoken within the family. In fact, considering the results for "conversations with family", it can hardly be asserted that this category constitutes one of the last safe havens for speaking the L-variety.

While the GETAS survey showed that Fergusons's domain "conversations with family, friends, and colleagues" cannot be placed safely anymore into an all Low German province, the results of my study (2003) for the same domain show that Platt still is the preferred language for all three groups (family, friends, colleagues) in the Grafschaft Bentheim. The results for the functional distribution between Low German and Standard German for this domain are presented in the following section.

4.6 Conversations with Family, Friends, and Colleagues - The Results from the 2003 Survey

I interviewed a total of eighty-eight Platt speakers between February and May 2003. All participants volunteered for an interview, i.e. they called my local number in Nordhorn after the local paper ran a story about my research. The subjects of this study are from many different places in the Grafschaft Bentheim; indeed, no part of the Grafschaft has been over- or underrepresented in this study. 52 participants (59%) were male, and 36 participants (41%) were female. The average age of the male participants was 59.2 years at the time of the survey, and the average age of female participants was 56.8 years. Table 4.4 illustrates the breakdown of age groups for the 2003 survey:

Table 4.4: Breakdown of Age Groups for the 2003 Survey

Age group	Male	Female
10-20	1 (2%)	1 (3%)
21-30	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
31-40	5 (10%	7 (19%)
41-50	6 (12%)	2 (6%)
51-60	12 (23%)	7 (19%)
61-70	20 (38%)	12 (33%)
71-80	7 (13%)	6 (17%)
81-90	1 (2%)	1 (3%)

The figures in this section are based on the results of the questionnaires that the Subjects filled out. They are complimented by quotes from the oral interviews which took place before the written part. Some of the questions in the 2003 study coincided with questions from the GETAS survey, while others were not included in the GETAS questionnaire (see appendix A). All answers, except for open-ended questions (see Appendix A), are in gradation, i.e. with five categories: "always", "often", "sometimes","seldom", or "never". All eighty-eight participants are fluent in Low German, and consider themselves to be “aktive Plattsprecher” (*active Platt speakers*).

Before I discuss the results of the 2003 study for the functional distribution of Platt and Standard German, I would like to explain the reasons why I did not divide the figures in the following sections according to age or gender:

1) Almost 75% of the subjects in the 2003 study were between fifty and eighty years of age at the time of the survey. Only two participants (2%) were under thirty, and twelve participants (14%) were between thirty and forty. The overrepresentation of older speakers, which clearly reflects the endangered state of the language, did not make it reasonable to analyze the results according to age.

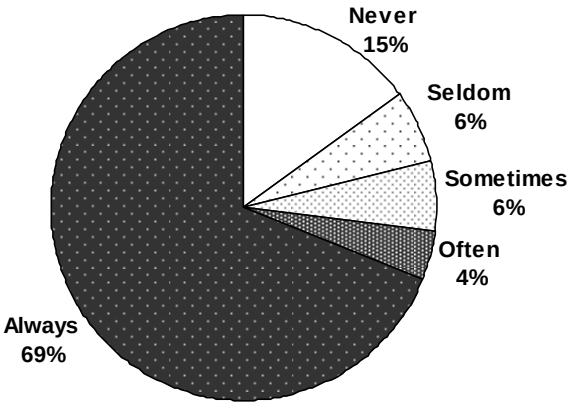
2) There were virtually no differences between the answers from male and female participants with regards to the functional distribution of Low German. Both male and female subjects had almost identical responses for this domain. I therefore abstained from an analysis of these results according to gender.

With this in mind, I now present the results for the functional distribution of Platt and High German of the 2003 study.

4.6.1 The Functional Distribution between Standard German and Low German for the Category "Conversation with Family" – The Results from the 2003 Survey

This category from the 2003 survey includes four groups: siblings, spouses, grandparents, and children. Figure 4.6.1a shows the distribution between Platt and Standard German for "conversation with siblings":

Figure 4.6.1a
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Siblings (2003 Survey)



These answers show that Platt is definitely the preferred language among siblings with 73% of all informants reporting that they "always" or "often" speak it with their brothers or sisters (compared to 18% in the GETAS study). Participant F. (66 years[179]) from Emlichheim, a former case worker for the mentally retarded, grew up with 10 brothers and sisters and reports that the language among siblings was always Platt and remains so to this day:

[179] Age refers to the time of the interview.

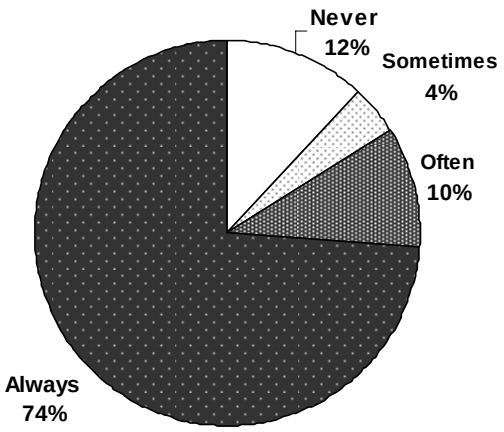
> "Unnermekaar heb wi alle Platt proat und doon het vandaage noch."[180]
> (Participant F., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

Participant S. (58 years), an engineer from Emlichheim, gives a similar statement:

> Met mien bröer heb ik altied Platt proat. Dat is vandaag noch so. Also, wie wödden noit keen Hochdütsch proaten.[181]
> (Participant S., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

Like the GETAS study, the highest results for using Platt with family members were achieved when the conversation partner was a grandparent as shown in figure 4.6.1b:

Figure 4.6.1b
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Grandparents (2003 Results)



[180] "We always talked Platt among each other, and we are still doing that." - my translation.
[181] "I have always talked Platt with my brother. I mean, we would never speak no High German." - my translation.

Figure 4.6.1b shows that the H-variety with only 12% is at the most marginally represented in conversations with grandparents. In fact, most participants stated that Standard German was used with grandparents only if one or both of them were not born in the Grafschaft Bentheim, e.g. refugees of W.W.II.[182]

The number of Platt speakers who used Platt with their spouses was somewhat lower. However, as figure 4.6.1c shows, Platt still enjoys a fair amount of usage in conversations between husbands and wives:

Figure 4.6.1c
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Spouse
(2003 Results)

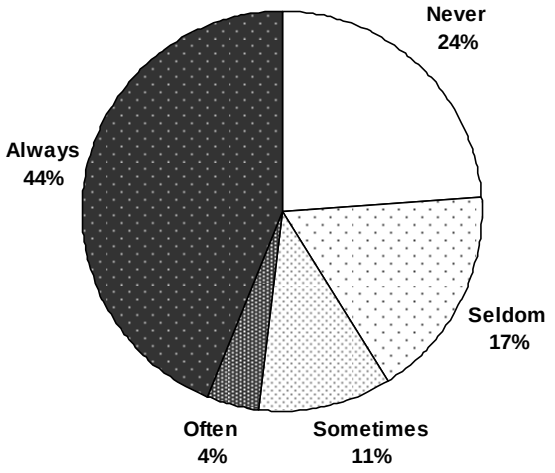


Figure 4.6.1c illustrates that, although lower in number, Platt is an important language of communication between spouses with 48% stating that they always or often use it in conversations with their spouse. For instance, participant K., 68 years, states:

[182] I discuss the linguistic situation of "Zugezogene" (people who moved to the Grafschaft) in detail in chapter five.

"In't hus met miene frau, doa proat we unnermekaar immer Platt."[183]
(Participant K., Veldhausen, March 13, 2003).

The lowest results in this category, similar to the GETAS study, were recorded for conversations with children. Figure 4.6.1d shows the result for this group:

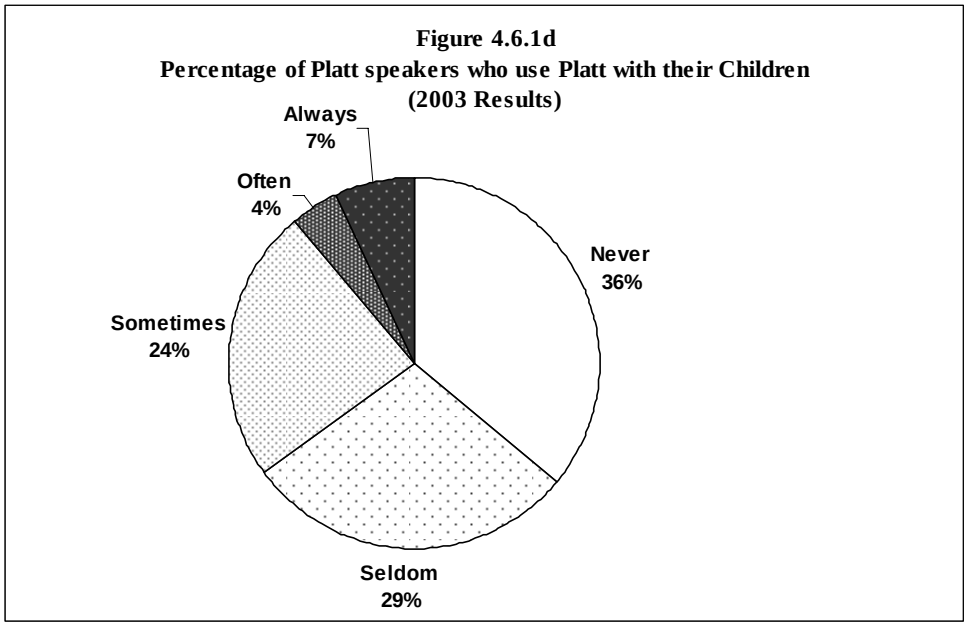
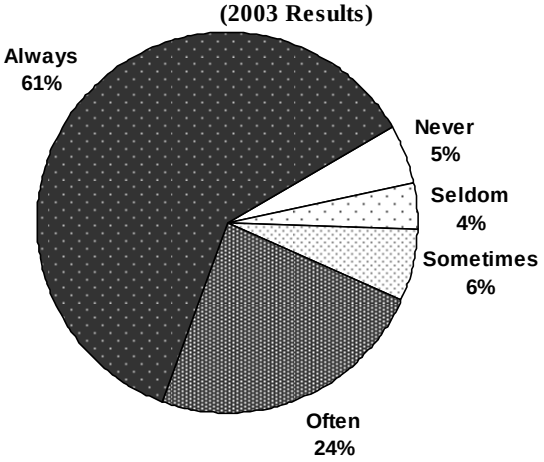


Figure 4.6.1d demonstrates that Platt is virtually absent in conversations with children, with only 11% of the informants reporting that they always or often speak it with their children. Unlike the GETAS study, there was no indication that the age of the children played any significant role, i.e. parents did not switch from High German to Platt once the children were older or had left school.

[183] "At home with my wife, there we always speak Platt among each other." - my translation.

Figure 4.6.1d is complemented by figure 4.6.1e in which the participants stated with whom they usually speak High German (see question 2, appendix A). If anything, the numbers for this question are even lower with regards to which language is spoken with children. Only 5% of the subjects reported that they "never" speak High German with their children:

Figure 4.6.1e
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Standard German with their Children
(2003 Results)



The reasons of parents for speaking almost exclusively High German with children were different than those stated in the GETAS survey and the Erp project (see section 4.5.1). More than 60% of the participants stated that they did not know any High German when they started school. The following two excerpts give a picture of this situation when the majority of my participants started school in the 1950s and early 1960s with no knowledge of High German:

"Wo ik noar school hinkwam, kün ik keen word Dütsch.“[184]
(Participant L., 50 years, Itterbeck, February 20, 2003)

Participant S., 58 years from Emlichheim, reports a similar situation when he started school:

"Hochdütsch was miene erste fremdsproake.“[185]
(Participant S., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

Yet, unlike the participants of the Erp-survey, less than 10% of the informants in my study professed to have had any serious problems with learning High German in school.[186] In fact, only two participants reported that they experienced any persisting problems with the High German language in school.[187]

The reason for speaking Platt with children in my target area thus cannot be found in painful school memories nor did any of my participants state they were afraid that their kids would not learn proper High German if they were mostly raised in Platt. Instead, several participants attributed the use of High German with their children to the general zeitgeist of the 1960s and 1970s in Germany. Participant F. puts it as follows:

[184] "When I started school, I did not know a word of High German." - my translation.
[185] "High German was my first foreign language." - my translation.
[186] One informant fondly remembers how her older sister used to quiz her on High German before she started school.
[187] One participant admitted that he had problems with the gender of High German well into 10th grade. The other reported that the grammar of High German still constitutes a problem for him.

> Met de kinner hebt wi nich Platt met proat, hebt wi immer Hochdütsch met proat. Warom weet ik nich. Dat was sicherlich tomoals ook 'ne marotte. Man muß met de kinner Hochdütsch proaten damit se dat van vornerein better leren. Man hat genauso good Platt proaten künt. […] Dat was ne Zeiterscheinung dat men meende men muß nu unbedingt met de kinner Hochdütsch proaten. [188]
> (Participant F., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003).

Participant S. relates a very similar story with regards to raising children in High German only as an excerpt from an interview with him shows:

> Met onse kinner heb't wi nich Platt doon. Dat was ook net de tied - dese hochdeutsche Welle, ik wil't moal so seggen - en, äh, wi proat met de kinner Dütsch.
> Interviewer: Wat was dat denn vöör'n tied - de hochdeutsche Welle?
> Dat was so in de sestiger joaren - doa vüngt dat an, dat Platt so de sproake van de buren was, 'n bettken minderwertige sproake, dat was so den tenor, nich? Fortschrittsentwicklung un so wat, nich? Doa proat men met de kinner Hochdütsch.[189]
> (Participant S., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

Participant K, 68 years, remembers how it was "fashionable" to raise children in High German in the 1960s:

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[188] "With the children we did not speak Platt with, have we always High German with spoken. Why, I don't know. That was surely at that time also a kind of quirk. One has to speak High German with the children so that they learit immediately. One could have just as well spoken Platt. It was some sort of sign of the times that one thought one absolutely has to speak High German with the children. " - my translation.

[189] "We didn't do Platt with our children, that was also just that time, this High German wave I would call it, and, uh, we speak High German with our children."
Interviewer: "Wat kind of time was that - the High German wave?"
"That was in the sixties, that's when it began that Platt became the language of farmers, a bit of an inferior language, that was the tenor, right? Progress and development and such things, right? That's when one spoke High German with children." - my translation.

> Wi hebt met onse kinner Dütsch proat. Dat was in de sestiger joare helemaal mode, dat men met de kinner gar keen Platt met proat sondern Dütsch.[190]
> (Participant K., Veldhausen, March 13, 2003)

All Platt speakers here hint at a loss of prestige that Low German suffered during the late sixties and much of the seventies. They also point out that raising their children in High German only was a conscious decision on their part to keep up with the changing times and not to appear "backwards" or "old-fashioned".[191] Other Platt speakers reported that raising their children in High German happened "automatically" without any conscious deliberation as the following excerpt shows:

> Dat hebt sik praktisch so ingeschliffen dat men met de kinner Hochdütsch proat.[192] (Participant M., Georgsdorf, 64 years, February 14, 2003.)

Still other Platt-speaking parents, especially those with many children, reported that they raised their older children in Platt and then switched to High German with their younger ones. This switch to High German, incidentally, usually took place in the mid-to late 1960s, i.e. during the aforementioned time of social changes, and produced some rather strange, almost comical, effects. For instance, one mother of nine remembers how each morning her husband used to wake up the older, Platt speaking

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[190] "We spoke German with our children. That was a real fashion in the sixties that one did not speak Platt at all with the children but German." - my translation.
[191] The late sixties and much of the seventies were indeed a time of great social change in Germany. The late sixties saw massive student demonstrations in the bigger cities, the loss of power of the Christian Democrats, and the social-democratic government of Willy Brandt. The seventies saw the formation of the Green Party, the beginnings of the Peace Movement, the Anti-Nuclear-Power Movement, house squatters, and the social-democratic government of Helmut Schmidt. It would be a worthwhile project to investigate the correlation between social change/progress and dialect erosion.
[192] "That just sort of happened, that one speaks High German with the children." - my translation.

children by saying: "Opstoan!" (*Get up!*), and then addressed the younger children with the High German equivalent: "Aufstehen!" (*Get up!*). Whatever the motive(s) for the parents' switch to High German might have been, the present result is a not altogether uncommon phenomenon of large families in the Grafschaft Bentheim where parents and older children communicate in Platt during family get-togethers, while parents and younger children, as well as older siblings and younger siblings, communicate in High German at the same occasion.[193]

In this section I discussed the functional distribution of Low German and Standard German among family members from my survey (2003). I showed that, unlike the results from the GETAS study, the results from my survey place this group into the L-variety with Platt being the preferred language in conversations between siblings, spouses, and with grandparents. The exception, similar to the results of the GETAS study, is conversations with children where the L-variety is virtually absent. I showed that the choice of language with children stands, at least partly, in correlation to the social changes that happened in Germany during the latter part of the 1960s and much of the seventies.

The overall high results of Platt in this category make it feasible to place "conversations with family" into the L-variety, and are thus in accordance with Ferguson's original placement. However, given the very low number of Platt speakers who use the language with their children, one has to wonder how much longer this

[193] This also was the case in some smaller families, e.g. participant K., two children, mentioned that he and his wife spoke Platt with their older son, but German with the younger one.

category will really remain Low German. Many of the children born in the late 1960s and early 1970s now have children of their own, and it is very likely to reason that the grandchildren-generation will grow up without much Platt at all.[194] The following section discusses the language use of Ferguson's second group, "conversations with friends".

4.6.2 The Functional Distribution between Standard German and Low German for the Category "Conversations with Friends" – The Results from the 2003 Survey

The results from my survey for this category, similar to those of the GETAS study, show that Low German is the preferred language between friends, as illustrated in figure 4.6.2a:

Figure 4.6.2a
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Friends (2003 Results)

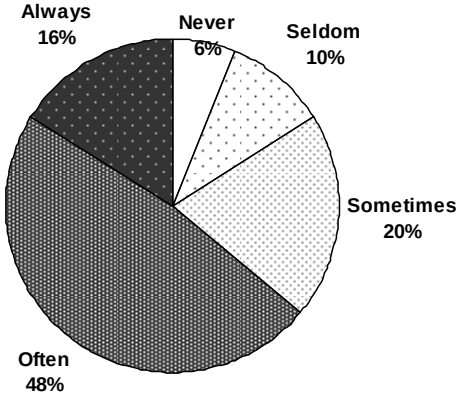


Figure 4.6.2a shows that 64% use Platt "always" or "often" with friends. This number is, in fact, almost identical to the GETAS result (68%). An important factor in the social life

[194] All of the older Platt speakers (55-70) reported that they do not use Platt with their grandchildren, i.e. they spoke High German with their children and continue doing so with their grandchildren. This choice is exemplified by one speaker who reported that she sometimes uses Low German words with her little granddaughter, "aus Jux" (*just for fun*). Chapter five discusses the consequences of this development in detail.

of the Grafschaft Bentheim are neighbors. I therefore also asked about language use with neighbors (see appendix A). The frequency of speaking Platt within this group was considerably higher than Platt usage among friends, as shown in figure 4.6.2b:

Figure 4.6.2b
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Neighbors (2003 Results)

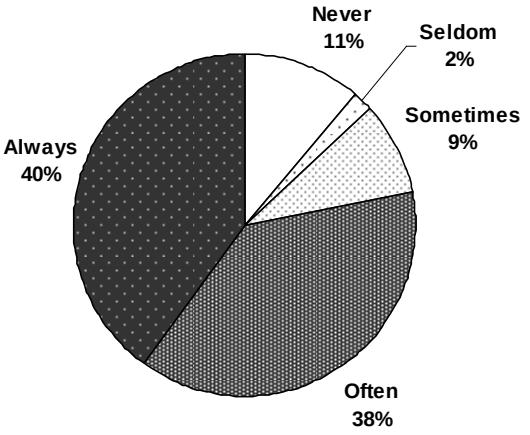


Table 4.5 shows a comparison of the frequency of L-usage with friends and neighbors:

Table 4.5: L-Usage with Friends and Neighbors (2003 Results)

Frequency of L-Usage	**Neighbors**	**Friends**
Always	**40%**	**16%**
Often	**38%**	**48%**
Sometimes	9%	20%
Seldom	2%	10%
Never	11%	6%

The higher results for L-usage with neighbors can be explained by the fact that the concept of neighborhood, more than in any other parts of Germany, plays a crucial part in the social life of the Grafschaft Bentheim.[195] It is also a quite private domain, i.e. events among neighbors such as parties, bowling or card clubs, helping out with repairs in the house etc., are characterized by its informality where the L-variety is clearly the preferred language of communication.

In this section I showed that conversations within the two groups "friends" and "neighbors" are to a large part carried out in the L-variety in the Grafschaft Bentheim. The results from my study thus confirm both Ferguson's placement of this group into the L-variety as well as the results of the GETAS study. The following section discusses the language use among Ferguson's last group in this category, "conversations with colleagues".

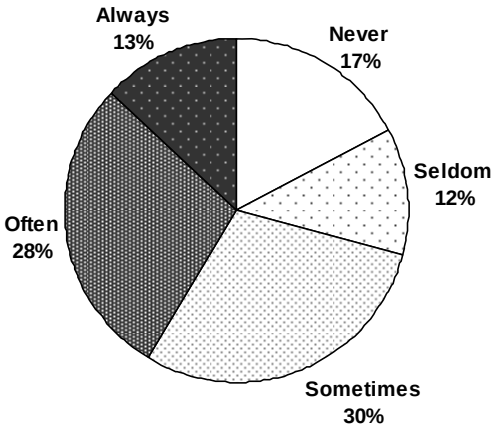
4.6.3 The Functional Distribution between Standard German and Low German for the Category "Conversations with Colleagues" – The Results from the 2003 Survey

The GETAS-survey found that Standard German is clearly the preferred and dominant language at work, with more than two-thirds (84%) of all informants stating that they speak Standard German only at work. The results for L-usage among

[195] Apart from spending time together, neighbors are also responsible to help each other, particularly in times of distress, such as deaths in the family etc. They also play an important role in organizing in each others' weddings.

colleagues from the 2003 survey, however, differ fundamentally from the GETAS results, as figure 4.6.3a illustrates:

Figure 4.6.3a
Percentage of Platt speakers who use Platt with Colleagues (2003 Results)



According to figure 4.6.3a 41% of all interviewed Platt speakers thus use the language with their colleagues often or always, plus an additional 30% stated to use it sometimes in conversations with colleagues. Only 29% stated to use Platt never or seldom when speaking with colleagues. These numbers are insofar of importance for Low German research because it is a common assumption (Sanders, 1987; Wirrer, 2000) that the sub-category "conversations with colleagues" is now firmly embedded into the H-domain. The results from my survey, however, clearly show that this is not the case In fact, a comparison of the frequency of L-usage with colleagues and spouses illustrate that spouses use Platt only slightly more frequently with each other than colleagues do:

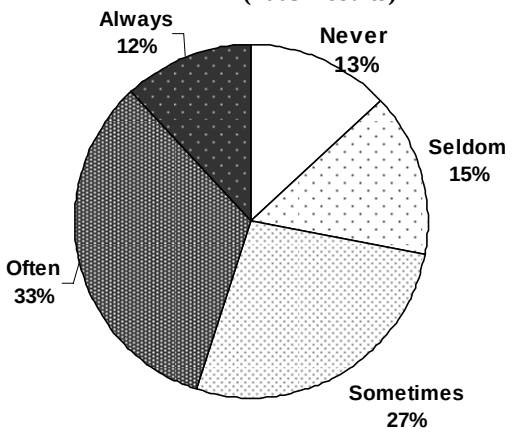
Table 4.6: Frequency of L-Usage with Spouses and Colleagues (2003 Survey)

Frequency of L-Usage	**Spouses**	**Colleagues**
Always	**44%**	**13%**
Often	**4%**	**28%**
Sometimes	11%	30%
Seldom	17%	12%
Never	24%	17%

Table 4.6 shows that 48% of the informants in my survey use Platt always or often with their spouses compared to 41% who use Platt often or always with their colleagues. These numbers suggest that the sub-category "conversations with colleagues" in my target area can be placed into the L-domain.

Question three from the questionnaire (see Appendix A) asked the informants whether they use Platt at work in general, i.e. other than talking to colleagues (e.g. with customers or clients, or to discuss business projects). The results for this question were even higher as figure 4.6.3b shows:

Figure 4.6.3b
Percentage of Platt speakers who generally use Platt at Work (2003 Results)



Before I discuss the results of figure 4.6.3b, it is necessary to recapture briefly another common assumption in diglossic theory, namely that the L-variety is usually not used for official work purposes. In fact, the L-variety, if it is at all used as a work language, has a decidedly "blue-collar" image with only such groups as "servants, waiters, workmen, and clerks" (Ferguson, 1996: 28) speaking it on the job. [196] This belief has been widely accepted within Low German research, so that Wirrer (2000) concludes:

> Als Arbeitssprache findet das Niederdeutsche vor allem im Handwerk, beim Fischfang und in der Landwirtschaft Verwendung. [197](Wirrer, 2000: 137)

Now, figure 4.6.3b shows that 45% of all informants use Platt always or often at work, with 27% reporting to use it sometimes at work.[198] However, the distribution of Platt usage at work between blue-and white-collar workers in the 2003

[196] The exception here is Swiss German in Switzerland, see also section 3.51.
[197] "As a language of work, Low German is mostly used by craftsmen, fishermen, and in agriculture." – my translation.
[198] This number includes retired informants.

survey is almost equal. 20% (18 informants) of the total number of informants who generally use Platt at work belong to white-collar professions (1 pastor, 3 office workers, 2 teachers, 1 businessman, 1 administrator, 2 bankers, 1 bank manager, 3 nurses, 3 engineers, and 1 postal master), while 25% (22 informants) hold blue-collar professions (7 homemakers, 6 farmers, 1 baker, 2 masons, 1 blacksmith, 1 carpenter, 1 house painter, 2 construction workers, 1 plumber, and 1 heavy machinery operator). Tables 4.7 illustrates the distribution of Platt usage at work among blue- and white-collar workers:

Table 4.7: The Distribution of Blue-and White-Collar Workers who Use Platt at Work (2003 Survey)

Blue-Collar Workers who use Platt at Work:	25% (22 informants)
White-Collar Workers who use Platt at Work:	20% (18 informants)
Total Percentage of Platt Speakers who use Platt at Work:	45% (40 informants)

Table 4.7 clearly shows that it is a common misconception to assume that Platt is not spoken or even unbefitting in traditional white-collar professions. The following excerpts from Platt speakers who hold white-collar jobs show how much Platt is still a part of the working environment. Participant S., an administrator with the city of Nordhorn, reports:

> Ik proat ook in'n beruf Platt. Ik heb een kollegen tegen mi sitten die komt ut W., däin proat net so Platt als ik, doa proat ik Platt met […]. Ik proat ook Platt met andere kollegen, ik proat sogar met de Bürgermeester Platt. Ik weet dat däin Platt kan, un wi proat denn grundsätzlich Platt wenn't nich wat offizielles-fachliches is. In normale gespröke proat wi Platt. Un dat wördt ook bi ons in Nordhorn - ik wil nich seggen direkt fördert - aber wi hebt ook an de dööre stoan: "Wi proat ook Platt."[199]
> (Participant S., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

The fact that this informant even frequently speaks Platt with the mayor is quite exceptional given the fact that most persons who hold public offices traditionally use predominantly the H-variety.[200] However, as participant S. points out, official or technical conversations are always held in High German, which clearly shows the boundaries of the diglossic distribution of H and L in this particular case.

Participant M., who serves as mayor in her community, reports that she often uses Platt in her position when she talks to citizens as the following segment shows:

> Interviewer: Wo is dat bi 't werk? I bent Bürgermeester?
> Participant M: Dat kumpt drup aun. Wenn dat löö van t' platte land bent, selbstverständlich proat ik doa Platt met.[201]
> (Participant M., Georgsdorf, February 14, 2003)

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[199] "I also speak Platt at work. I have a colleague sitting across from me, he comes from W., he speaks Platt just as well as I do, with him I speak Platt […] I speak Platt with other colleagues, I even speak Platt with the mayor. I know that he knows Platt, and I talk always Platt with him if it is not anything official or technical. In normal conversations we speak Platt. And that is also here in Nordhorn - I wouldn't say it is promoted - but we have a sign on the door and it says "We also speak Platt". - my translation.

[200] It should be pointed out here that politicians who run for office in northern Germany nowadays often include a phrase or two in Platt in their speeches to show that they are "common" people. The overall majority of persons holding a public office, however, do not use Platt on the job.

[201] Interviewer: "How is that at work? You are the mayor?" M: "That depends. If they are people from the countryside, of course I speak Platt with them." - my translation.

These two statements show that Platt is in an integral factor as a means of communication within the local administration, both to communicate with citizens and as a preferred language among administrators. Participant F. confirms this point:

> Wenn ik op de Gemeindeverwaltung kumme en doa sitt gewisse löö, doa proat ik van vornerein bloß Platt.[202]
> (Participant F., Emlichheim, March 10, 2003)

It is, however, not only at local administrations that Platt is used at work. In the community of Itterbeck (ca. 1800 inhabitants), Platt is the official language of the town council's meetings. Participant L., a member of the town council, reports:

> Participant L: De Gemeinderatsitzungen holln wi op Platt.
> Interviewer: De Gemeinderatsitzungen? Echt?
> Participant L: Ja, doa wördt Platt proat.
> Interviewer: Dat is alles op Platt?
> Participant L: Ja, alles.
> Interviewer: Men wo is dat denn als men dat protokoll mött doon?
> Participant L: Dat protokoll kömpt up Dütsch. Dat wördt dann later in't Dütsch ömsett.[203]
> (Participant L., Itterbeck, February 20, 2003)

Similarly to the town council sessions, some political meetings are also entirely held in Platt. Participant M., the mayor of her town, reports how the meetings of her political party are conducted in Platt only:

> "Bi de Fraktionssitzungen proat wi schier Platt."[204]
> (Participant M., Georgsdorf, February 14, 2003)

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[202] "If I go to the local administrators and there are certain people sitting there, then I speak Platt from the beginning." - my translation.
[203] J: "We hold the town council meetings in Platt." Interviewer: "The town council meetings? Really?" J:"Yes, that is done in Platt." Interviewer: "That is all in Platt?" J:"Yes, everything." Interviewer: "But what happens when you have to do the protocol?" J:"That is in German. That is later translated into German." - my translation.
[204] "We speak Platt only at the meetings of our [political] party." - my translation.

In some cases, Platt is spoken at work to create a comforting, or even soothing, atmosphere. This is especially the case in hospitals, for instance when older patients show a negative or confused reaction to the hospital environment. Participant Y., a retired nurse, explains:

> Met miene patienten heb ik immer Platt proat. Wenn ik vernommen heb, die kan Platt, dann heb ik doa immer moi Platt met doon, en dann was die best tevreden. 't heft sogar hölpen de löö gesond maken. Dat heb ik seen oop de Intensivstation - doa heb ik joarlang werkt. Dat heb ik seen as de monitor, wenn se dann rythumsstörungen hadden, aude löö, die deiden de femde Krankenhausatmosphäre bang, un doa heel schlecht sik infügen künt, dann heb ik mi dan mangs met de löö, wenn ik dann 'n betken tied had, bi de patienten heinsett un Platt proat. Un dann duurt't gar nich lang un de ryhtmusstörungen warn ut de EKG. Un dann hebben mensen vroagt "Ja, was haben Sie da gemacht? Was haben Sie da für Medikamente gegeben?". Un dann heb ik dat em eben vertellt wo dat an liggt, die wilt ja bloß 'n gevöll hebben, ik bin in'n hus. Däin kent mi, doa kann ik met proaten net als in 't hus.[205]
> (Participant Y., Nordhorn, April 7, 2003)

Similar to hospitals, some public service centers, such as banks, post offices, or larger stores, also use Platt with their customers. Participant L., a bank manager, relates that a knowledge of Platt is even quite an advantage for potential job applicants, both for communicating with customers and with colleagues alike:

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[205] "I have always talked Platt with my patients. When I found out, this person knows Platt, then I always talked fine Platt with them. Then they were really satisfied. It even helps to make people get better again. I saw that in the Intensive Care Unit - I worked there for years. When I saw on the monitor that there problems with the heartbeat, old people who were really afraid of the strange atmosphere in the hospital and who couldn't adjust at all, then, if I had a bit of time, I would sit down with the patients and talk Platt. And then it didn't last long and the heartbeat problems were out of the EKG. And then people would ask me [in High German]: "Well, what did you do? Which medication did you give?" [Back in Platt] And then I could tell them the reason for this. They just want to have the feeling that they are at home. That person knows me, I can talk with him just like at home." - my translation.

Participant L: Hier bi de bank wördt 'ne heele masse Platt proat. Also, ik segg eens moal tussen fiefensestig en tachtig prozent proat men hier noch wel Platt. Ook met de kollegen. Ik heb 'nen jongen kollegen hier, däin is fiefentwintig, sesentwintig joarn aud, dei proat net so Platt als ik ook, also wenn wi över saken proat, dan proat wi Platt. Wi hebt 'ne heele masse jonge kollegen doabi, die ook Platt proat.

Interviewer: Is dat denn nodig hier, dat se Platt proat?

Participant L: Ja, ja, Doar wördt sogar in de Bewerbungsgespräch noar vroagt: "Kannst ook Platt proaten?" Dat is nich ausschlaggebend, men dat is doch wel een vöördeel als men't kann.[206]
(Participant L., Itterbeck, February 20, 2003)

Participant L. also points out that certain technical-official talks with customers, e.g. financing a house, are done in Platt:

> Ik weet, ik heb morgen nomiddag een gesprök met jonge löö, die 'n hus baun wilt, un dat doon wi op Platt. De löö bent - hoe aud bent die - die bent midden twintig, en ja, dat hele gesprök vörn wi op Platt.[207]
> (Participant L., Itterbeck, February 20, 2003)

This statement shows that Platt, contrary to most statements (e.g.Wirrer, 2000), does serve to talk about or explain complex situations. However, not all Platt speakers agree. Some informants reported that they cannot express everything they want in Platt, particularly when it comes to technical details or technical jargon. Participant K, a house painter, explains:

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[206] "Here at the bank a lot of Platt is spoken. Well, I would say that we still speak here between 65% and 80% Platt. Also with the colleagues. I have a younger colleague here, he is 25, 26 years old, he speaks as well Platt as I do, so when we talk about things, we do it in Platt. We have a lot of young colleagues here who also speak Platt."
Interviewer: "Is it necessary here that they know Platt?"
"Yes, yes. We even ask about this in job interviews "Can you also speak Platt?" That is not a decisive factor, but it is quite an advantage if they can do it." - my translation.

[207] I know I have a meeting with some young people tomorrow afternoon, they want to build a house and we do this in Platt. The people are - how old are they - they are in their mid-twenties and yes, we conduct the entire meeting in Platt." - my translation.

Participant K: De helen Fachutdrücke, die loat sik schwoar op Platt seggen.
Interviewer: Geeft 't doa een beispiel vöör? Wat vöör wörder?
Participant K: Het vaungt an met PVC, de ganzen einzelnen chemischen Verbindungen, of Acryllack, synthetische Stoffe, en so wieder, nich? [208]
(Participant K., Veldhausen, March 13, 2003)

Participant X., a retired teacher and artist, agrees and points out that it is nearly impossible to hold a conversation in Platt on an elevated artistic level:

Participant X: Ik heb de indruk dat also op de plattdütsche sproake heel weinig theorie, also abstrakte themen kunnen beproat wödden. Ik kan mi met eene die Groafschupper Platt proat hoas nich over Kunst unnerhollen.
Interviewer: Warom?
Partcipant X.: Weil, äh, ik mött dat nu op Hochdütsch seggen: "Die Vielgestaltigkeit der bildnerischen Techniken, die lyrische Farbgebung." Dat versöök es moal eben op Platt. Versöök dat es moal eben op Platt te verklikkern, dann seggen se: "Wat proat däin doch al?"[209]
(Participant X., Nordhorn, March 8, 2003)

[208] "All these technical expressions can only be said with difficulty in Platt." Interviewer: "Can you give an example for this? Which words?" "It starts with [in High German] PVC, all the chemical compositions, acryl paint, synthetic stuff, [back into Platt] and so on, see?" - my translation.
[209] "I have the impression that in the Low German language very little theory, like abstract topics, can be discussed. I can almost not talk about Art with someone who speaks Grafschafter Platt." Interviewer: "Why?""Because, uh, I have to say this in High German [switches to High German] the diversity of artistic techniques, the lyrical coloring, [back into Platt] Try that in Platt. Try to explain that in Platt, then they say "What is he talking about?" - my translation.

The statements by participants K. and X. demonstrate that, even though the L-variety in the Grafschaft Bentheim enjoys a wide usage, there are certain lexical constraints in some areas that ultimately do not always permit usage of L.[210]

In this section I showed that, unlike the results of the GETAS study, Platt is an important language in the professional world in the Grafschaft Bentheim. I illustrated that Platt is not only used in conversation among colleagues, but also to conduct business (e.g. administration, banking etc.). I also showed that the distribution of Platt usage at work among blue- and white-collar workers is almost equal in my target area. The following section presents a conclusion with regards to the functional distribution of Platt in the GETAS study and in the 2003 survey within the context of diglossic theory and Low German research.

4.7 Conclusion

The GETAS survey from 1984 showed that only one sub-category of Ferguson's category "conversations with family, friends, colleagues" , namely that of "friends", can safely be placed into the L-domain. The sub-category "family" is only marginally represented within the L-domain (grandparents), while the sub-category "colleagues" has completely moved into the H-domain. The GETAS results are thus not in accordance with Ferguson's placing of this group into the L-domain. They also cast

[210] There have been some attempts to introduce Low German words for technical terms, such as *huulbessen* ("howling broom") for Standard German *Staubsauger* ("vacuum cleaner"). However, these attempts have been largely unsuccessful. For example, only one Platt-speaking couple I interviewed reported to actually use *huulbessen* in their daily speech.

serious doubts on claims that families are one of the last groups in northern Germany in which Platt is used more often than Standard German. Considering that in the more than twenty years that have passed since the GETAS study, not much has been done in northern Germany to promote Platt, one has to wonder whether the category "conversations with friends, family and colleagues" is really still shared by both Platt and High German (see section 4.4).

The results of the 2003 survey, however, confirm Ferguson's point that this category belongs into the L-domain. Within Low German research the functional distribution of Platt of the 2003 survey is quite remarkable, especially the results for Platt usage on the job. These results demonstrate that the Grafschaft Bentheim is unique because Platt functions as a vital and important language in the professional world both among blue-and white-collar workers. They also show that Platt, in spite of its continuous erosion in the last century, can still successfully serve as a means of communication at the modern-day workplace as well as in political settings. [211] The high amount of Platt usage among white-collar workers in my target area calls for a reevaluation of the commonly accepted assumption, both in diglossic and Low German research, that the L-variety is not capable of fulfilling sophisticated functions in a professional environment. In conclusion, while the GETAS results for the functional distribution of Platt are proof of Low German's massive eroding, the results from the 2003 survey stand as a testimony to the vitality of Platt and to the loyalty of its speakers. They also show that in spite of

[211] These results are reminiscent of Swiss German, the L-variety in Switzerland, which also functions as main means of communication in business and political settings, e.g. plenary discussions.

past losses of categories to Standard German, the Grafschaft remains essentially a diglossic speech community.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the functional distribution of Platt with an emphasis on Ferguson's category "conversations with family, friends, and colleagues". In section 4.1 I showed why functional distribution is regarded as a key factor by many researchers for identifying diglossic speech communities. In section 4.2 I gave a summary of the functional distribution of Platt during the 16th and 17th century and showed how Low German, beginning with the economic decline of the Hanseatic League, first competed with Early New High German for certain domains (sermon in church, poetry, schools and university), and eventually lost them to the H-variety. Section 4.3 discussed Missingsch, the blending of the H and L-varieties in northern Germany in an attempt to emulate the H-variety. In section 4.4 I gave an overview of the present functional distribution of Platt and showed that there is now not one single domain left that is occupied by Platt only. I also discussed the methodology and controversial results of the 1984 GETAS study in this section. Section 4.5 illustrated the results of the GETAS study for the functional distribution of Platt for the category "conversations with family, friends, and colleagues". I showed that only one sub-category, namely "conversations with friends", can be placed justifiably within the L-variety, and also that the sub-category "conversations with colleagues" is now firmly embedded in the H-variety. In section 4.6 I presented the results of my survey (2003) for the same category and showed that all three groups in the Grafschaft Bentheim still

belong to the L-variety. I also pointed out that Platt is used frequently for official work purposes regardless of the line of work. Finally, I concluded with a call to reevaluate the assumption that Platt, or indeed any L-variety, cannot serve as a means of communication in professional or political settings.

The high amount of Platt in the Grafschaft Bentheim in public places and in the professional world presupposes that people who only speak the H-variety not only understand the L-variety but that they are highly tolerant, even supportive, of Platt and its speakers.[212] In other words, the H-speakers' attitude toward the L-variety is a key factor for the survival or decline of L. The following chapter then examines the language attitudes of H-speakers toward various L-varieties, and in particular the language attitudes of Non-Platt speakers toward Platt in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

[212] Monolingual H-speakers now represent the majority of people in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF NON-PLATT SPEAKERS

5.0 Introduction

We have seen in chapter two and three that Platt has been eroding in northern Germany, including the Grafschaft Bentheim, for the last couple of decades. In fact, monolingual Standard German speakers (i.e. H-speakers) now constitute the majority in Platt-speaking communities all over northern Germany. Local estimates of monolingual Standard German speakers for the Grafschaft range from sixty to seventy percent. It was therefore important for the 2003 survey to include a significant number of H-speakers as well. The interviews with H-speakers mainly focused on their language beliefs and attitudes toward the L-variety, since these factors, among other things, will determine the fate of L in the long run. It must be added here that previous surveys on Platt, such as the 1984 GETAS study, were exclusively concerned with L-speakers and/or particular features of L. Consequently, the results of these surveys are often incomplete or slanted since they do not take into the account the majority of the population.[213] The 2003 survey constitutes thus one of the first attempts in Low German research to include Standard German speakers into the overall picture of the current language situation of Platt.

[213] The overall focus on L constitutes a general problem with surveys in diglossic speech communities, since H-speakers often form the majority in these communities, or at least wield a considerable influence over language choice.

Section 5.1 briefly recaptures Ferguson's diglossic rubric "prestige". Section 5.2 addresses language beliefs in their historicity and shows that positive or negative attitudes toward a language are a quite old phenomenon. Section 5.3 discusses the social nature of language attitudes and also highlights some of the most important studies in the field of language attitude research from around the world. In section 5.4 I review two case studies on how language attitudes contribute to the status of a language in bilingual language communities. Section 5.5 provides an overview of language attitude studies in Germany, i.e. toward other German L-varieties. In section 5.6 I present the results from the 2003 survey and conclude with a summary in section 5.7.

5.1 Ferguson's Rubric 'Prestige'

Ferguson's second rubric of diglossia is titled 'Prestige'. According to Ferguson, the speakers of a diglossic speech community "regard H as superior to L in a number of respects" (1996: 29):

> There is usually a belief that H is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts, and the like. (1996: 29)

Ferguson points out that this viewpoint is shared by all speakers of a diglossic speech community, including the L-speakers (1996: 29). Ferguson explains that in some cases religion, and here specifically books that are considered sacred by all members of the speech community, account for the perceived superiority of H. Ferguson cites another case in point from Arabic:

> For Arabic, H is the language of the Qur'an and as such is widely believed to constitute the actual words of God and even to be outside the limits of space and time, i.e. to have existed 'before' time began with the creation of the world. (1996: 29)

Any attempt to give the L-variety equal standing in religious matters, e.g. translating the Bible into L, is often met with considerable resistance by the speech community. For example, Ferguson mentions that the translation of the New Testament into *dhimotikí* (the Greek L-variety) "was the occasion for serious rioting in Greece in 1903" (1996: 29).[214]

It must be mentioned here, that the fact H is considered to be the prestige variety and that L is lacking in prestige is somewhat connected to Ferguson's third rubric 'Literary Heritage'. In all of Ferguson's four case studies, there exists a considerable amount of literature in the H-varieties (Greek, German, French, Arabic), but hardly any literature in the L-variety. Moreover, both H-speakers and non-H speakers (be they monolingual L-speakers or people from outside the speech community) often associate certain works of H-literature ("Classics") with essential values that epitomize the culture in question (Ferguson, 1996: 30).

5.2 Language Varieties/ Language Attitudes in their Historicity

Language varieties and attitudes to language varieties and/or to foreign languages are as old as the evolution of language itself. In his discussion on languages and dialects, Wardhaugh (1992) points out that "all languages exhibit a great deal of internal variation" (1992: 22). In fact, according to Wardhaugh, any language is ultimately the product of its varieties:

[214] Wardhaugh points out that there exist parallels to this incident in Greece in modern English insofar that many English speakers "resist the Bible in any form other than the King James version." (1992: 92)

> Each language exists in a number of varieties and is in one sense the sum of those varieties. (1992: 22)

Language variation is thus not a new phenomenon. For example, "Classical Greek" consisted not only of one single language, but was comprised of various "dialects" of Greek, as Haugen explains:

> In Griechenland [hat…] es in der klassischen Periode keine einheitliche Norm des Griechischen gegeben, vielmehr nur eine Gruppe von nahe miteinander verwandten Normen. […] Jede Varietät [war] besonders ausgebildet für bestimmte literarische Zwecke, z.B. Ionisch für die Geschichtsschreibung, Dorisch für Lyrik und Attisch für die Tragödie. In dieser Periode bestand die Sprache, die man "Griechisch" nennt, somit aus einer Reihe von unterschiedlichen, doch miteinander verwandten Normen, bekannt als "Dialekte". (1966: 153)[215]

Similar to language varieties, attitudes toward languages, be they negative or positive, also date back considerably. Two examples from the Greek/Roman period are given here to illustrate historically documented language attitudes: The Greeks considered their language to be superior and any other tongue than their own as "barbarous". Although culturally indebted to the Etruscans, the Romans' dislike for the Etruscan language was such that they permitted Etruscan to go unrecorded for posterity after they had subjugated them.[216]

This section briefly illustrated that language varieties and language attitudes are two phenomena that can be traced back (at least) to Antiquity. The research of language

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[215] "There was no uniform norm of Greek during the classical period in Greece. Rather, there existed a group of closely related norms. Each variety was used for certain literary purposes, e.g. Ionic for historians, Doric for lyricists, and Attic for tragedy. Thus, in this period the language that one calls "Greek" was comprised of a number of different but yet closely related norms, known as "dialects." - my translation.
(This article was reprinted in "Zur Theorie des Dialekts", Göschel, 1976).

[216] For more information, see Pei (1966: 200-202).

attitudes as an academic discipline is considerably more recent and will be discussed in some detail in the following section.

5.3 The Social Nature of Language Attitudes

The field of researching language attitudes is a relatively new discipline in linguistics and grew out of sociolinguistics in the 1960s and 1970s with Labov, Fishman, and Ferguson as its preeminent representatives. From its inception, researchers such as Lambert et al. (1960), and Fishman (1966) have stressed the social nature of language evaluation. That social, rather than linguistic factors constitute the fabric of language attitudes was first discovered by Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum in 1960 in a study to evaluate reactions toward French Canadian and English in Montréal, Canada. In their study Lambert et al. introduced the so-called "matched-guise technique" (MGT). This technique consists of evaluators listening to the same speaker reading a tape-recorded passage in a number of different accents/dialects. Usually, the evaluators are not aware that the speaker, despite of all his 'guises', is the same person nor is this fact revealed to them.

Lambert et al. found out that both the English-speaking *and* the French-speaking evaluators in their study reacted more favorably to the English guise. Since at that time, English was mainly the language of a generally higher status group in this part of Canada, Lambert et al. concluded that the judges of their study did not evaluate a particular speech per se (English or French), but rather reacted to the social stereotypes that the guise

represented.[217] In this case, it meant that evaluators who belonged to the lower-status group (French-Canadians) exhibited more favorable reactions to English than to their own language, because they associated the English speakers with more prestige and social power. These results became even more apparent by the fact that the Franco-Canadian judges rated their own variety lower than their Anglo-Canadian counterparts.

Lambert's technique became a common tool for evaluating language attitudes, not only in researching attitudes toward non-related languages (e.g. English and French), but also for research with regards to language attitudes toward language varieties. In other words, the matched-guise technique served as an equally adequate tool to investigate language attitudes in diglossic speech communities. Within the English-speaking world Tucker and Lambert (1969) carried out a comparable study in the U.S. were white and black college students were presented with a number of varieties of American English (southern dialects, African American Vernacular English, Network English, etc.). All groups, including the black students, rated Network English as superior to any other variety, even though at that point in time African-Americans were hardly or not at all represented among the TV-News corporations.[218] On the other hand, however, Lambert and Tucker's study showed that race apparently does play a role in judging the guises' voices. For instance, the dialect group that the black students rated the least favorable was "Educated White Southern" which was associated by them as being the least trustworthy, the least honest, and the least friendly dialect.

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[217] For more information, see Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960: 44-51).
[218] Network English refers to the type of American English employed by American national newscasters. There is, however, controversy whether this type of American English really exists outside the newsroom, i.e. if it has any natural speakers.

The political nature of language attitudes becomes very clear when one investigates the linguistic situation in West African countries, such as Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon. Adegbija (2000) points to the "dense multilingualism" (2000: 80) in this region, and to the fact "that in most West African countries, no language is spoken by more than 50 percent of the population as a first language" (2000: 80). Table 5.1 gives an overview of the present linguistic state in these countries:

Table 5.1: West African Countries, their Colonizers, and the Principal Languages[219]

Country	**Colonizer**	**Principal Languages**
Cameroon	France/Britain	Bamileke, Fang, Ewondo, Fulfulde, English, French
Gambia	Britain	Manding, Wolof, Fulfulde, English
Ghana	Britain	Akan, Dagbani, Ewe, Hausa, Adangme, Nzema, Ga, Dagaari, English
Liberia	America	Bassa, Kpelle, Krio, English
Mali	France	Bambara, Fulfulde, Arabic, French
Nigeria	Britain	Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulfulde, Pidgin English, Kanuri, Edo, Ijo, Efik, Idoma, English
Senegal	France	Wolof, Fula, Serer, Diola, Malinke, Soninke, Arabic, French
Sierra Leone	Britain	Mende, Temne, Krio, English
Togo	France	Ewe, Kabiye, Hausa, French

Despite this multilingualism, Phillipson (1992) points out that the dominance of the ex-colonial languages English and French continues unremittingly to this day:

[219] From: Adegbija (2000: 82).

> The continued dominance of French and English in independent African countries indicates that these countries have inherited the same type of legacy. This is a legacy of linguicism in which the colonized people have internalized the language and many of the attitudes of their masters, in particular their attitude to the dominant language and the dominated languages (Phillipson, 1992: 128).

The result of this development is a compartmentalization of languages in which French and English serve as H-varieties, particularly in education, while the native languages, for instance Fula or Malinke in Senegal, are reduced to L-functions, such as conversations among family and friends. In fact, the dominance of French or English in the educational domain is such that students who use their native tongues in school settings are punished for doing so. Adegbija explains:

> Many school authorities in West Africa forbid school pupils from speaking their mother tongues in the school environment and those who flout this order are punished. Such laws send a subtle message to the youths about the functional and practical importance of European languages in crucial contexts of life and affect their attitudes accordingly in their formative years. (2000: 89)

Indeed, the disregard for native tongues for educational purposes has had as its outcome that most indigenous West African languages do not have standardized orthographies nor are they widely used in the media. In fact, printed media in West Africa is dominated to more than eighty percent by English, French, and Portuguese (Adegbija, 2000: 88). With this kind of suppression of the use of indigenous languages, it is not very surprising that they are ranked in general as inferior to British and French. Adegbija points out that the L-speakers themselves see their languages as unsuitable for most H-domains (politics, science, education, etc.):

> In most formal and official settings, indigenous West African languages have a very low esteem. (Adegbija, 2000: 88)

One major reason for this low esteem is the fact that many parents in West Africa regard European languages as a launch pad to opportunity and discourage their offspring from using native tongues:

> In many West African homes today, […], only European languages can be heard. This is because many parents are eager for their children to have a head start on European languages, believed to be the window on the world.(Adegbija, 2000: 87)

A language –attitude analysis of 600 Nigerians (60.6 % Yoruba, and 36.4% of other ethnic origin) toward the use of English in Nigeria, conducted in 1994, provides some concrete numbers about language attitudes in West Africa. Table 5.2 shows the results of questions 1-4:

Table 5.2: Language Attitudes among L-Speakers toward the Use of English in Nigeria[220]

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not rated
1) A local language should replace English as a medium in schools	10.8%	12%	20.6%	56.0%	3.0%
2) Students would learn more effectively if taught in their mother tongue	24.3%	32.8%	22.5%	19.3%	1.0%
3) Nigerian languages can effectively cope with modern sciences	8.8%	17.5%	31.6%	41.8%	0.2%
4) The use of English as a medium of instruction is a threat to national unity	17.6%	16.6%	27.8%	37.5%	0.3%

These answers by L-speakers about the use and status of the H-variety confirm Ferguson's notion that all speakers of a diglossic speech community share a belief in the superiority of H.[221] This belief is particularly evident in the results for question three with 73.4% of the informants stating that native Nigerian languages are not suitable for scientific use.

With regards to language-attitude analyses among Ferguson's original case studies, Papapavlou (1998) used the matched-guise technique to look into language attitudes toward Standard Modern Greek (SMG, the H-variety) and the Greek dialect of Cyprus (Cypriot Greek, the L-variety). His judges were twenty two students (twenty female and two male) of the University of Cyprus, all of them native L-speakers, who

[220] From: Adegbija, 2000: 94.
[221] The linguistic situation in these countries would fall under Fishman's extension of diglossia (see chapter 3), rather then being an example of diglossia in the Fergusonian sense.

listened to two female and three male Greek-Cypriots employing the matched-guise technique. According to Papapavlou, the guises were able to "use the Cypriot dialect and SMG without being detected as either Cypriots or mainland Greeks" (1998: 20). Based on the guises' voices the evaluators were then asked to judge them on twelve polar traits, such as "intelligent – unintelligent", "educated – uneducated", "friendly – unfriendly" etc. Papapavlous's results showed that all five speakers, in their Cypriot guise, were judged to be more uneducated than in their SMG guise. Furthermore, the SMG guises were regarded as "more attractive, more ambitious, more intelligent, more interesting, more modern, more dependable, and more pleasant" (Papapavlou, 1998: 22) by the Cypriot judges. On the other hand, the Cypriot guises were seen as "more sincere, friendlier, kinder and more humorous" (Papapavlou, 1998: 22) than the SMG voices. Papapavlou's conclusions for this differentiation are both linguistic and social:

> a) The attitudes toward SMG and the dialect are probably linked to most Cypriots' inability to express themselves fully in SMG and, therefore, their attitude of "reverence" and "respect" toward something that they have never been able to master completely.
> b) [The] Cypriot's desire to discard their agricultural past (represented, among other things, in the dialect) and their eagerness to adopt anything "new' and to join ranks with modern societies. (Papapavlou, 1998: 25)

Papapavlou's study is of importance in the field of diglossic research because, by taking up one of Ferguson's original case studies forty years after it was first published, it reaffirms Ferguson's viewpoint of H's perceived superiority over L by all speakers of a diglossic speech community.

Another interesting language-attitude study comes from Denmark. Similar to other European countries (Germany, Greece, France), Denmark is characterized by various diglossic speech communities with *rigsdansk* (Standard Danish) serving as H-variety and numerous local dialects, particularly "Low Copenhagen", the traditional dialect of the Danish working class in Denmark's capital, serving as L-varieties. Kristiansen (2003) points out that school authorities in the 1960s and 1970s regarded the many local Danish dialects as "unlearned, bad, unnatural [and] sloppy" (Kristiansen, 2003: 61), and have been striving to make *rigsdansk* the only "good, natural, proper" standard language in education (Kristiansen, 2003: 61). This situation has been somewhat reversed in recent times since many of the traditional local dialects are dying out or have already become extinct. Kristiansen reports:

> The local dialects are dying or dead […] and therefore do not represent any threat to the standard language. Thus it has become common among Danes in general to mourn for the loss of the dialects. (2003: 63)

"Low" Copenhagen, on the other side, has spread considerably during the last decades, especially among younger Danes, and has become the target of language purists all over Denmark (Kristiansen, 2003: 63). Danish dialectologists have studied the attitudes toward dialects in recent years in a series of "dialect ranking" experiments.[222] Unlike the matched-guise technique, dialect ranking is a more direct method to elicit data about language attitudes. Kristiansen explains:

[222] Kristiansen does not state any details in his article, i.e. time, location, number of participants, etc.

> The procedure is simple. Take any audience of people you come across, give them a paper with a list of names of dialects and ask them to rank the dialects according to which they like the best, second best, etc. In other words, they are asked to make their own ranking of Danish dialects. (2003: 64)

The results of these experiments, according to Kristiansen, have been continuously the same: the H-variety *rigsdansk* ranks at the top while the L-variety *københavnsk* ("low" Copenhagen) is voted the least favorable dialect:

> Irrespective of where in Denmark the experiment is administered, the average ranking order turned out to be the same: *rigsdansk* at the top, followed by the western regional varieties in second position and the eastern ones in third position. […] *Københavnsk* always ends up at the very bottom of the rankings. (Kristiansen, 2003: 64)

Kristiansen sums up the present attitudinal pattern in Denmark as follows:

> In the hierarchy of Danish varieties, *rigsdansk* occupies an uncontested top position and "low"Copenhagen an uncontested bottom position, with the many regional accents in between. (2003: 66)

The situation in Denmark with regards to language attitudes shows that Ferguson's hypothesis about the H-variety's dominance in terms of prestige can be applied to this country, even though it has never been one of his case studies.

So far, I have discussed language attitudes that clearly favored H and dismissed L. The situation in German-speaking Switzerland, however is quite the opposite. In section 3.5.1 I have shown that the functional distribution of Swiss German (the L-variety) and Standard German (the H-variety) is inconsistent with Ferguson's classical model of diglossia because Swiss German now occupies such formal H-domains as education, court, and universities. Parallel to this development the prestige of Swiss German has also risen considerably. In fact, use of Standard German in the German-speaking cantons

of Switzerland carries with it some decidedly negative connotations. For example, Koller (1992:336) reports that 56% of the *Bundesdeutsche* (Germans from the Federal Republic of Germany) who live in Switzerland feel that the use of Standard German is not appreciated by the *Schweizerdeutsche* (Swiss Germans). Berthele (2003: 119) adds that competence in L is often a precondition for any kind of social interaction in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland:

> Während man die H-Varietät in Fergusons Paradigma braucht, um sozial *auf*zusteigen, braucht man in der deutschen Schweiz L, um überhaupt sozial *ein*zusteigen.[223] (Berthele, 2003: 119, italics by author)

The language attitudes of Swiss Germans toward their respective L-and H-varieties are quite interesting, because they constitute one of the few cases where H is not seen as superior to L, i.e. these attitudes stand in contradiction to Ferguson's model. I will show in section 5.6 that the prestige of H and L in the Grafschaft Bentheim are somewhat similar to the Swiss state of affairs.

In this section I discussed the social nature of language attitudes. I showed how the matched-guise technique can be used as a tool to elicit attitudes toward languages and toward varieties of the same language. Various language-attitude studies from around the world, with the exception of Switzerland, showed that the H-variety is consistently rated as more prestigious than L. This section also illustrated how L-speakers habitually associated their own speech with inferior traits and stereotypes, and thus confirmed Ferguson's point that L enjoys a low status among its own speakers.

[223] "While one needs the H-variety in Ferguson's model to climb the social ladder, one needs L in German-speaking Switzerland in order just to be social." – my translation.

Negative or positive attitudes toward a language or a dialect can have quite an impact on the general status of a language. In fact, a language's decline or survival (or revival) is often closely linked to language attitudes. The following section discusses two case studies on how language attitudes directly contribute to the status of a language among the speakers of their respective communities.

5.4 The Effects of Negative and Positive Language Attitudes

5.4.1 The Effects of Negative Language Attitudes - The Decline of Hungarian in Oberwart, Austria

The village of Oberwart is situated in Burgenland, Austria, near the border with Hungary. Both Hungarian and German were spoken in this area since about 1000. Gal (1979) points out that Oberwart can be described as rather a bilingual community in Fishman's sense (see chapter 3) than true diglossia in the Fergusonian sense by showing that both languages enjoyed equal prestige up until the 1950s[224]:

> In Oberwart 20 years ago there were young-adult speakers who, during informal exchanges with acquaintances of their own age, used only Hungarian, while other Oberwarters of the same generation used only German under the same circumstances. (Gal, 1979: 47)

[224] This assertion, of course, is strengthened by the fact that Hungarian and German are non-related languages, thus creating a case of broad diglossia in Fishman's sense (see also chapter three).

In her study Gal found out that both Hungarian and German were associated by the people of Oberwart with certain values. While Hungarian represented the agricultural past of Oberwart, German was mostly associated with the newer world of white-collar employment and more material success:

> It would not be too extreme to say that Hungarian […] symbolizes the old way of life, the old forms of prestige of the peasant community. […] In contrast, the world of schooling, of employment, and of material success is a totally German-speaking world. (Gal, 1979:106)

As the area became more industrialized during the second half of the 20th century, younger members of the community began to reject Hungarian as a "peasant language" and to favor German instead as the language of opportunity. The different values attached to the two languages resulted in a loss of prestige for Hungarian and a boost for German or, in other words, it created an H-variety (German) and an L-variety (Hungarian) in Oberwart. Gal points out that this change of prestige and, as a result, the creation of diglossia was driven mainly by economical factors

> The relative prestige of the German and Hungarian languages for bilinguals in Oberwart today derives directly from local historical-economic circumstances and reflects the relative prestige and income of those who can speak Hungarian as opposed to those who speak German. (Gal, 1979: 107)

In fact, the status of Hungarian had sunk so low in Oberwart during the time of Gal's research that it was considered a "useless language":

> Hungarian is considered a useless language because only peasant work is possible without a thorough knowledge of German. (Gal, 1979: 106)

This loss of prestige of Hungarian had as a consequence that bilingual German-Hungarian speakers did not pass on Hungarian anymore to their children:

> The higher prestige of German over Hungarian is demonstrated by the fact that today the children of a monolingual German speaker and a bilingual German-Hungarian speaker virtually never learn Hungarian regardless of which parent is bilingual. (Gal, 1979: 107)

Indeed, the desired educational goal for many Oberwarter parents are kids whose German does betray "no trace of Hungarian influences" (Gal, 1979: 107), or "*Nëm vág bele e madzsar* "The Hungarian doesn't cut into it" (Gal, 1979: 107). This cycle of decline, due to a loss of prestige, is completed by the Oberwarter Hungarian-speaking children who, according to Gal, readily accept the new social connotations of the two languages:

> The children of Oberwart's Hungarian-speaking peasants […] now accept the higher prestige of German and scorn Hungarian because they are attempting to adopt the way of live and values of […] the German-speaking Austrian[s].
> (Gal, 1979: 63)

Gal sums up the result of this development in Oberwart in one sentence:

> "Bilinguals, especially the young, accept the values of monolinguals."
> (1979: 107)

In this section I showed how negative attitudes toward a language can result in its decline. Section 5.4.2 discusses the opposite effect, i.e. how positive attitudes toward a language can contribute to its maintenance and revival.

5.4.2 The Effects of Positive Language Attitudes – the Revival of Welsh

Wales is situated in the south-eastern part of Great Britain and has its own language, *Cymraeg* (Welsh) which is derived from Common Celtic.[225] When the Anglo-Saxons conquered the British Isles during the 5th and 6th centuries, the native Celtic-speaking population was pushed to the peripheries of Great Britain, i.e. present-day Wales and Scotland, and effectively separated from the new rulers of the island.[226] In 1283 the English king Edward I conquered Wales, and in 1536 Henry VIII, with help form his chief administrator Thomas Cromwell, incorporated Wales into England by issuing the Act of Union. The chief goal of this Act was to impose English administration and English jurisdiction onto the Welsh people, which in turn led to the creation of England as a modern sovereign state, often referred to from then on as England and Wales.

The initial reaction of the Welsh people to this Act of Union was actually quite positive since it ended decades of lawlessness and guaranteed them equality by law with English citizens. The English king, however, included a 'language clause' into the Act of Union in which he decreed that only English was suitable enough for any state business and that Welsh-speaking citizens would be barred from holding any public office. In fact, Henry VIII saw it as his mission to "extirpate all and singular sinister usages and customs belonging to Wales" (Act of Union 1536-1543). The Act of Union made English the sole language of government and law, and abstracted Welsh from such H-

[225] For an introduction to Welsh, see Williams (1980); for an introduction to Middle Welsh, see Evans (1964).
[226] The language of the Anglo-Saxon invaders was, of course, not English yet, but led eventually to Old English. For more information, see chapter two.

domains as politics, law, and administration. The following excerpt from 1682 by William Richards of Helmdon, an English magistrate at the time, illustrates the quite brutal attitudes of the new overlords in Wales toward the native language:

> The native Gibberish is usually prattled throughout the whole of Taphydome, except in their Market Towns, whose inhabitants being a little raised […] above the ordinary scum, do begin to despise it. (Aitchinson and Carter, 2000: 28)

The effect on Welsh of such laws and attitudes resulted in a drastic decrease of native speakers in the next couple of centuries with a serious danger of complete erosion.[227] Jenkins and Williams point out that by 1951 "the number of Welsh speakers had plummeted to 714,686 (28.9 percent of the total population over the age of three" (2000: 13). In 1971, this number had decreased even further to 542,425. However, by the 1960s the evolution of Welsh toward extinction was halted by the Welsh people themselves with a series of grass-roots movements to preserve the ancient language. The impetus to arrest this development came by the Welsh poet, playwright, and language activist Saunders Lewis in a radio address on BBC Radio entitled *Tynged yr laith* ("The fate of the language") in which he urged his compatriots to stand up and fight for their language. Jenkins and Williams report that the rousing effect Lewis' radio address had on his listeners can hardly be overestimated:

[227] For more information, see Aitchinson and Carter (2000: 21-47); and Jenkins and Williams (2000: 1-27).

> That defining moment in the history of the Welsh language occurred in February 1962 when Saunders Lewis, […], returned to the glare of publicity by delivering his historic radio lecture *Tynged yr laith*, in which he declared that as long as the linguistic status quo prevailed there was a strong likelihood that the demise of Welsh would occur early in the twenty-first century […] *Tynged yr laith* ushered in a new sense of commitment to the recovery of Welsh. (2000: 14)

What followed was a series of actions by the Welsh people to preserve their language. Similar to the United States and other western European countries, the 1960s saw the formation of a civil rights movement in Wales. Unlike those other countries, however, the focus of the Welsh Civil Rights Movement was the preservation and revival of their native language, as Jenkins and Williams explain:

> The constitutional methods and polite decency of their [*i.e. middle-class student activists*] ancestors were replaced by militant non-violent direct actions deliberately calculated to invite police intervention, prosecution, fines and imprisonment […] and to compel the authorities to take the language issue seriously. (2000: 15)

Around the same time Welsh parents all over the country began to enroll their children in Welsh-medium playgroups, nursery schools, and toddler groups. These schools were the result of yet another grass-roots effort, the formation of *Mudiad Ysogolion Meithrin* ("The Welsh-medium Nursery School Movement") in 1971. The success of these schools was immediate and eventually led to the reestablishment of Welsh in the educational domain:

> It [the Nursery School Movement] proved spectacularly successful and by 1998-99 there were around a thousand Welsh-medium playgroups, parent and toddler groups, and nurseries offering a full range of pre-school activities. Its influence as a pre-condition for successful bilingual education cannot be overemphasized. The establishment of Welsh-medium schools, at primary and secondary level, helped to dispel the notion that English was the only worthwhile and effective medium of education, and among appreciable numbers of non-Welsh speaking parents the old language, which had formerly been a source of shame, came to be highly cherished as a source of identity and self-esteem.
> (Jenkins and William, 2000: 17)

The effort by Welsh parents eventually paid off in form of the Education Reform Act of 1988 which made the study of Welsh a mandatory subject in primary and secondary schools.[228]

Likewise, also in the 1960s and 1970s, the Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh Books Council sought to increase the number of published books in Welsh with considerable success. Between 1963 and 1998 the output of books in Welsh had grown by more than 500% from 109 to 573. This number might seem insignificant in comparison to publications in English, but "within the context of lesser-used languages in western Europe, this was an extraordinarily achievement" (Jenkins and Williams, 2000: 19). Similar to literature works, the 1970s saw the establishment of community papers in Welsh:

[228] The University of Wales, however, as well as other colleges continues to use English as language of instruction. For more information, see Jenkins and Williams (2000: 17).

> Between 1973 and 1988 fifty-two *papurau bro* [Community newspapers] were established with a total monthly circulation of around 70,000 and a readership of ca. 280,000. By 1990 this community venture commanded a higher proportion of readers than the combined readership of the [Welsh dailies published in English] *Daily Post* and *Western Mail.*[229] (Jenkins and Williams, 2000: 20)

Despite these gains, the census of 1991 showed that the number of Welsh speakers between 1981 and 1991 did not increase. Rather, the results indicated that the number of speakers stabilized in this decade (from 508,207 in 1981 to 508,098 in 1991). This stabilization process is largely attributed to the grass-roots efforts of the Welsh people and politicians to revitalize their language.[230] The outlook for Welsh, however, remains rather mixed. On the one hand, Jenkins and Williams report that "the current trend points toward […] language death" (2000: 27). On the other hand, the state of Welsh at the beginning of the 21st century is much healthier than it has been in the centuries before:

> Welsh is much stronger in 2000 than it was in 1900. Institutionally it is more robust, and […] its public status is high, its use in daily life – on official forms, public notices, place-names – is extensive, and it figures prominently in education, the media, law and local government. Its own people no longer regard it as a stumbling block, […] and only a minority […] continue to disparage or patronize it. (Jenkins and Williams, 2000: 23)

[229] In spite of this success, Wales is still lacking a daily paper in Welsh. The attempt to introduce a Welsh language Sunday-paper perished after only fourteen issues in 1983 (Jenkins and Williams, 2000:20).

[230] The total scope of Welsh-language movements and grass-roots efforts on its behalf is such that it cannot be adequately discussed in detail here. For more information, see Betts (1976); Aitchinson and Carter (2000), and Jenkins and Williams (2000).

The example of Wales shows how positive attitudes toward a language can overcome and even reverse a trend toward language extinction. Jenkins and Williams report that in the first half of the 20th century Welsh was seen by its own speakers as "inadequate for modern needs" and as a "source of shame" (2000: 8-9). In other words, the speakers of the L-variety acted in accordance with Ferguson's dictum that H is superior to L. However, the reversal from L being a prestigiously inferior language to one with a high prestige resulted in the survival and ultimately revitalization of a language expected to be extinct by now. The Welsh example also highlights the social nature of language attitudes, i.e. how closely they are tied to culture and tradition. In 1953, well before Lewis' radio address, the Welsh Department of the Ministry of Education issued a statement in which it commented on the relationship between language and local identity:

> We cannot support the view that the culture and the ways of life of Wales have no relationship to the language, or that it is quite possible for the non-Welsh-speaking child to partake of the tradition, and of the culture of Wales, without a knowledge of the language. There is a close relationship between our language and our culture, the one cannot fully or even adequately be understood without the knowledge of the other. (Aitchinson and Carter, 2000: 44)

In this section I discussed the development of the Welsh language. I showed how positive language attitudes expressed by the L-speakers coupled with grass-roots efforts to preserve and revitalize a language can reverse a trend toward language erosion. Before I discuss the language attitudes toward the L-variety from my study, it is necessary to take a look at dialect-attitudes in Germany proper.

5.5 Attitudes toward Dialects in Germany

5.5.1 Language-Attitude Studies in Germany

Unlike Great-Britain, the United States, or indeed most other countries, Germany is for the most part lacking a structured and sophisticated body of language attitude studies and dialect prestige studies. While there are numerous works dealing with German dialectology per se, the study of dialect prestige and of attitudes toward dialects has been largely neglected, as Hundt (1996) points out:

> Generell kann festgehalten werden, dass ein erhebliches Ungleichgewicht besteht zwischen dem deutsch-und dem englischsprachigen Raum was die Forschungen zu Einstellungen gegenüber Dialekten oder – allgemeiner – gegenüber Sprachvarietäten betrifft.[231] (Hundt, 1996: 226)

Traditional German dialectology has been and is mainly concerned with describing phonological, morphological, and lexical features of the numerous German dialects which resulted in a huge body of work.[232] On the other hand, however, socio-psychological questions, such as dialect prestige, are still regarded as a *Randgebiet* (peripheral area) within this discipline in Germany:

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[231] "In general it can be stated that there exists a considerable imbalance between the German-speaking and the English-speaking countries with regards to research about attitudes toward dialects, or – more generally – toward language varieties." – my translation.

[232] For instance, a search at the University of Texas' library under the keyword "German Dialects" produced over 2000 results. For an introduction to the most common German dialect groups, see Lockwood (1976). It must be mentioned here that, besides traditional dialectology, Germany has produced an enormous body of trivial literature about its dialects. One can find recipes, jokes, anecdotes, sayings, collections of swear words, place and family name histories, and much more for any given German dialect: a sign of the Germans' interest in and fondness of their regional dialects.

> Neben der Erforschung und Kartierung von Laut-, Formen- und Wortbeständen sind solche eher sozialpsychologischen Fragestellungen [i.e.dialect prestige] relative junge und randständige Erscheinungen in der deutschen Dialektologie.[…]Die Erfassung von Dialektbewertungen […] ist kein zentrales Thema der deutschen Dialektologie.[233]
> (Hundt, 1996: 224)

This situation is rather unfortunate because it does not enable us to compare language-attitude studies or dialect prestige studies from Germany with comparable studies from the United States, Great-Britain, Nigeria, etc. One of the few empirical dialect studies from Germany we do have is Hundt's 1992 analysis of attitudes toward four different German dialects to which we now turn in section 5.5.2.

5.5.2 Attitudes toward the Standard Language Spoken with a Dialect – Hundt's 1992 Study

In 1992 Hundt, by using the matched-guise technique (see 5.3), conducted a study In Germany to test language attitudes toward speakers who speak the H-variety with a dialectal coloring. The dialects Hundt chose were Bavarian, Swabian, the dialect of the Pfalz (Palatinate), and the dialect of Hamburg.[234] Hundt's main research question was whether evaluators from southern Germany show negative attitudes toward a speaker who speaks High German with a northern dialect and vice versa. His methodology consisted of having four speakers reading short texts in Standard German colored by one of the four dialects mentioned above. Hundt's evaluators consisted of 73 male and

[233] "Besides researching and mapping the phonological, morphological, and lexical inventory, socio-psychological questions are relatively young and marginal phenomena within German dialectology. […] The collection of dialect evaluations […] is not a central topic of German dialectology." – my translation.
[234] For information about some typical features of these dialects, see Hundt (1992: 52-54).

female German college students, all of them speakers of the H-variety, i.e. Standard German. In order to determine his judges' dialect attitudes, Hundt had his guises read the texts to a northern group of judges (33 evaluators), and to a southern group of judges (40 evaluators).[235] Similar to Papapavlou's attitude study (1998) on Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek (see 5.3.), Hundt used twelve polar traits in his questionnaire from which the judges had to circle one member of each respectively. Table 5.3 shows the traits of Hundt's study:

Table 5.3: The Twelve Polar Traits of Hundt's 1992 Study

friendly	unfriendly
beautiful	ugly
good	bad
light	dark
square	round
active	passive
fast	slow
exciting	boring
robust	soft
strong	weak
thorough	superficial
heavy	light

[235] A second major research question, whether male and female judges show different dialect attitudes, fell somewhat short since the judges in Hundt's male group only numbered nineteen (versus sixty-nine in the female group). This number was, by Hundt's own account, too little to elicit any real concrete data. Nonetheless, Hundt's results show that there are no major differences between males and females when evaluating German dialects. For more information, see Hundt (1992).

In addition to this questionnaire, Hundt used a second questionnaire in which the participants, similar to the experiments in Denmark (Kristiansen, 2003; see 5.3), were asked to rank the dialects according to which they liked best. This *Sympathieskala* (sympathy scale) ranked from one to four, with one being the dialect the judges liked best, and four being the one they liked the least. This second questionnaire also included two more open-ended questions in which the participants had the opportunity to write down spontaneously any additional comments they had about the four respective dialects.

The results of Hundt's study proved to be somewhat surprising because his participants did not rate the four dialects according to the much-expected *Nord-Süd-Gefälle* (north-south difference).[236] On the contrary, both the northern group of judges and the southern group rated the guise speaking with a Hamburg dialect (a northern dialect), and the guise speaking with a Bavarian dialect (a southern dialect) as the two most likeable dialects. Swabian (a southern dialect) rated consistently third among all participants, while *Pfälzisch*, the dialect of the Pfalz (a mid-southern dialect), was rated the least attractive. Here are some examples of the judges' ratings: one of the main reasons all participants gave for not liking *Pfälzisch* is its final n-deletion (e.g. *mir fahre*: we are driving. High German: *wir fahren*). This was seen as "sloppy", "plump" and "backwards" by Hundt's judges. In general, this dialect was judged permanently negative by all participants. It was affiliated with being "primitive", "stupid" and "just

[236] Similar to the United States or Italy, the difference between northern and southern Germany can be quite considerable. A not always friendly, century-old rivalry has resulted in numerous stereotypes about the respective manners, customs, and, most of all, dialects of the two respective regions. Even today, any major first-league soccer match between a northern and a southern team will show that this rivalry is far from being an item of the past.

plain ugly". Swabian was associated by many with being "vulgar", but was also judged to be "old-fashioned", "uneducated" and "square". Bavarian, on the other hand, was seen as "powerful", but was also frequently associated with such folksy notions as "inviting", "*gemütlich*"[237], and "smelling of a warm wooden hut". *Hamburgisch*, finally, was mostly associated with more sophisticated features, such as "intellectual", "polite", "clear", and "superior", but was also often seen as "clinical", "distanced", and "unapproachable".

The fact that both northern and southern judges rated Standard German with Hamburgisch and Bavarian coloring at the top made Hundt conclude that the prestige of the four tested dialects are connected with the High/Low-variety distribution in Germany. Both Hamburgisch and Bavarian were recognized by his judges as relatively "light" dialects, since they show the least variation from the H-variety, High German [238]. In other words, the participants were able to comprehend these two dialects at (almost) all times. Swabian and especially Pfälzisch, on the other side, vary from High German often to such a degree that it was considerably more difficult for Hundt's judges to comprehend the respective guises of these dialects. Hundt concludes:

[237] There is no English adjective that could convey the meaning of the German word "gemütlich". It is often translated as "homey", or "comfortable", but these attempts are only an approximation.

[238] One could argue, however, that Standard German spoken with a Hamburgisch coloring is far closer to the standard norm than Standard German spoken with a Bavarian coloring. It is possible, but not mentioned by Hundt, that his participants rated Bavarian as a "light" dialect due to its relatively high recognition throughout Germany.

> Ein Dialekt, der nahe an der theoretischen Hochsprache liegt, bzw. dessen tertiäre Dialektmerkmale als unbedeutende Abweichungen von dieser Norm toleriert werden, wird eher akzeptiert (z.B. Hamburgisch) als ein Dialekt, dessen Merkmale als auffällig abweichend von dieser theoretischen Norm gehört werden.[239] (1992: 80)

And:

> Es bleibt festzuhalten, dass die Tendenz, eine Sprachvarietät, die nahe am sogenannten Hochdeutsch liegt, besser zu bewerten […] in der vorliegenden Untersuchung bestätigt wurde.[240] (1992: 77)

This was especially true for Hamburgisch, which varies so little from Standard German that many participants did not really associate it with a dialect at all.[241]

Hundt's study is significant for research on diglossia because it illustrates how in Germany, too, the H-variety, High German or Standard German, is regarded by speakers of German as the most acceptable and most prestigious form of German. It also shows that L-dialects that diverge from the H-variety, such as Schwäbisch (Swabian) or Pfälzisch, are seen as inferior ("ugly", "primitive", "vulgar" etc.). On the other hand, Hundt's study demonstrates that L-dialects which only diverge slightly from the accepted norm (e.g. Hamburgisch and, to a certain degree, Bavarian) are approved of much more by H-speakers and are given a higher rating in terms of prestige.

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[239] "A dialect that is closer to the High variety, or whose tertiary dialect features are tolerated as inconsequential variations from the norm, is sooner accepted (e.g. Hamburgisch) than a dialect whose features are regarded as highly derivative from this theoretical norm." – my translation.

[240] "It remains to be noted that the tendency to give high ratings for a language variety which is close to so-called High German […] was confirmed in this study." – my translation.

[241] This seems rather ironic given the fact that Hamburg used to be, at one point, one of the centers of Platt. In this way, Hundt's study is a good indicator of how much Platt has receded to High German in the big cities.

In this section I discussed attitudes toward German L-varieties. I showed that, unlike in other countries, German dialectology and linguistic research has for the most part neglected empirical studies about language/dialect- attitudes and dialect prestige. I also discussed Hundt's study about H-speakers attitudes toward four regional L-varieties (Schwäbisch, Pfälzisch, Hamburgisch, and Bayrisch), and his conclusion that those varieties that differed the least from Standard German enjoyed the highest esteem, while those that considerably diverged from Standard German were regarded as inferior.

So far I have discussed how the concept of Ferguson's second rubric "Prestige" applies to many diglossic speech communities (in both Ferguson's and Fishman's sense), insofar that the respective L-varieties, be they Canadian French, Scottish English, Cypriot Greek, "low" Copenhagen, Nigerian native languages, or German regional dialects such as Schwäbisch or Pfälzisch, are regarded by members of the community as unsuitable for certain domains and as inferior to the respective H-varieties.

The following sections discuss the language attitudes of Standard German speakers (the H-variety) from my study toward Platt (the L-variety). It seems appropriate at this point to mention that the afore-mentioned GETAS study surveyed language attitudes toward Platt only marginally and was mainly concerned with eliciting data about the number and location of Platt-speakers, and the speakers' competence of Platt. The questions and results of my study then present one of the first attempts to find out what non-Platt speakers, i.e. H-speakers, really think of Platt.

5.6 Language Attitudes of Non-Platt Speakers toward Platt – Results from the 2003 Survey

I interviewed a total of thirty-five non-Platt speakers in my target area between the ages of eighteen and sixty (21 female, 14 male). All of them are of German origin, and had been living in the Grafschaft Bentheim for at least fifteen years. About 60% were refugees from W.W.II, i.e. they mainly came from former eastern territories, such as Pomerania or Silesia, or they moved to the Grafschaft from other parts of Germany in the last decades.[242] The other 40% were born in the Grafschaft but never learned to speak Platt.

In light of the quite considerable language differences between Low German and High German (see chapter 2), one of the most important research questions was to find out whether the use of the L-variety in the presence of H-speakers is regarded as a social obstacle. The following section explores whether knowledge of the L-variety is seen a as a necessary basis for social integration in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

5.6.1. Knowledge of the L-Variety as a Basis for Social Integration

Before I present my research questions pertaining to this topic, I give here some excerpts from H-speakers about the language problems they encountered when they moved to the Grafschaft in the 1960s and 1970s, i.e. at a time when L was still the predominant language of communication. Mrs. E. (59 years old and born in the Ruhr Area) first visited Emlichheim in 1964 with her future husband, a native of the Grafschaft

[242] It should be noted that all non-speakers came to the Grafschaft at a time, when the use of Platt was much more wide-spread than it is now.

Bentheim, and moved there for good in 1972. She describes her first encounter with Platt as follows:

> Interviewer: Haben Sie was verstanden, als Sie das erste Mal Platt gehört haben?
> Mrs. E.: Nein, nur hier und da ein bisschen. […] Das war wie eine ganz andere Sprache, die ich nicht konnte. Das war wie ein anderes Land, wo alle eine andere Sprache sprechen. (Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)[243]

Couple B. (retirees, 74 and 64 years old) from Nordhorn, who moved to the Grafschaft from southern Lower-Saxony in 1959, reported a similar experience.

> Interviewer: Wie war denn Ihr erster Eindruck? Haben Sie alles verstanden?
> Mrs. B.: Nee, anfangs überhaupt nichts.[244] (Nordhorn, March 11, 2003)

Finally, couple C. (56 and 59, teacher and speech therapist), who also moved from southern Lower-Saxony to the Grafschaft in 1975, likened their first experience with Platt to being confronted with a completely different language:

[243] Interviewer: "Did you understand anything when you heard Platt for the first time?" Mrs. E.: "No, only here and there a bit. That was like a totally different language I didn't know. That was like a different country, where everyone speaks a different language." – my translation.
[244] Interviewer: "What was your first impression? Did you understand anything?" Mrs. B.: "No, in the beginning nothing at all." – my translation.

Mrs. C.: Als wir zuerst nach Emlichheim kamen, habe ich Brötchen gekauft für die Umzugsleute in der Bäckerei V. Und da im Geschäft haben alle nur Platt gesprochen, aber wirklich nur Platt, auch an der Kasse.

Interviewer: Haben Sie denn etwas verstanden?

Mr. C.: Nein, nichts. Das hätte auch genauso gut Chinesisch sein können. […] Als wir hierher kamen, war es in gewisser Weise eine Art Kulturschock wegen der Sprache. […]. Es war schon ziemlich heftig. Man war, sagen wir es freundlich, doch reichlich erstaunt und befremdet.[245] (Emlichheim, March 12, 2003)

This perceived "otherness" and distinctiveness of the L-variety that couple C. describes, was shared by Mrs. E. who describes her impressions as follows:

Mrs. E.: Zum ersten Mal hab ich's erlebt […], dass man irgendwo hingeht und man hört nicht zu – es finden also Unterhaltungen statt im Café oder bei der Bank – und man kriegt nichts davon mit, da bleibt absolut nichts von hängen. Das ist als ob die Leute Chinesisch reden, wohingegen wenn man sonst normalerweise irgendwo hingeht, dann kann man doch später im Unterbewusstsein nachvollziehen, wovon geredet wurde.[246] (Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)

These excerpts demonstrate the initial "language shock" that newcomers to the Grafschaft experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. The ability or inability to understand the

[245] Mrs. C.: "When we first came to Emlichheim I bought some bread rolls for the movers in the bakery V. And there in the store people spoke only Platt, but really only Platt, even at the register." Interviewer: "Did you understand anything?" Mr. C.: "No, nothing. That might just as well have been Chinese. When we came here, it was to a certain degree a kind of culture shock because of the language. […]. It was pretty difficult. We were, to put it mildly, rather surprised and shocked." - my translation.

[246] "For the first time it happened to me […] that you go somewhere and if you don't listen – e.g. there are conversations in a coffee shop or at the bank – and you don't understand anything. Absolutely nothing stays with you [of what was spoken]. That is as if the people speak Chinese. Whereas, if you normally go somewhere, then you do remember subconsciously what was spoken." - my translation.

L-variety, in other words, created initially a social barrier for newcomers; a barrier, it should be noted, that according to their own accounts often lasted for years.

Two of the 56 questions from the questionnaire for H-speakers (No. 28 and 29)[247] directly inquired about their reactions when other people around them speak the L-variety, Platt. The excerpts above show that contact between L-and H-speakers are a daily occurrence in the Grafschaft Bentheim, thus it was to be expected that almost all H-speakers could relate well to these questions. Similar to the questionnaire for Platt-speakers, the answers consisted of a five-scale gradation: “agree strongly”, “agree”, “do not know”, “do not agree”, and “do not agree at all”. Given Ferguson’s theory that H-speakers will see the L-variety as inferior (see 5.1.), the results of the matched-guise experiments (see 5.3.), and finally the initial language problems H-speakers encountered in the Grafschaft, it was to be expected that the H-speakers in my study would confirm Ferguson’s theory. Figures 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 show the reactions of H-speakers toward the use of Platt in their presence:

[247] See Appendix B for the entire questionnaire.

Figure 5.6.1
"I don't like it when people speak Platt because I can't understand everything"
(2003 results)

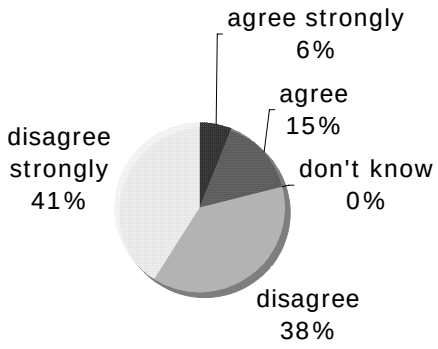
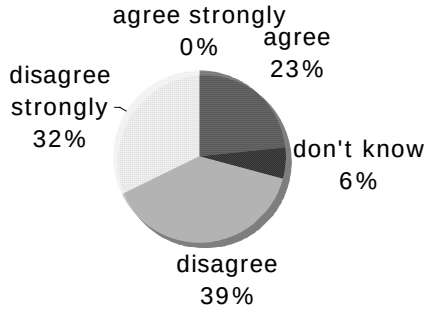


Figure 5.6.2
"I feel like an outsider when people speak Platt."
(2003 results)



Figures 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 clearly show that the H-speakers' attitudes toward the presence of the L-variety, despite their initial language problems, are quite positive. 79% of all H-speakers stated that they know the L-variety well (chart 1), and 70% declared that they don't feel like outsiders when people around them use the L-variety (chart 2). The high results of H-speakers claiming to understand the L-variety can be explained by the fact that most H-speakers were able to understand Platt reasonably well after they had lived in the Grafschaft for a couple of years. The fact, that using the L-variety does not make people feel like outsiders may be explained by the hospitality of the natives toward newcomers, as couple B. fondly remembers:

Mrs. B.:	Wir empfanden die Grafschafter als sehr freundlich. Die waren sehr hilfsbereit und haben uns viel erklärt. Wenn wir mit Einheimischen zusammen gewesen sind, und die sprachen untereinander Platt, dann haben die uns viel erklärt.
Mr. B.:	Die haben einem sofort erklärt, was gemeint war und worüber gesprochen wurde.
Interviewer:	Haben Sie sich denn aufgrund der Sprache manchmal als Außenseiter gefühlt?
Both:	Nein, gar nicht.
Mrs. B.:	Nein, wir haben uns von Anfang an wohl gefühlt.[248] (Nordhorn, March 11, 2003)

[248] Mrs. B.: "We felt that the Grafschafter were very friendly. They were very helpful and explained a lot to us. When we were together with natives and they talked Platt with each other, then they explained a lot to us."Mr. B: "They would tell us immediately what was meant and what they were talking about." Interviewer: "Did you sometimes feel like an outsider because of the language?" Both: "No, not at all." Mrs. B. "It was like home for us from the beginning." - my translation.

Couple D. (58 and 59, retiree and gardener), who moved to the Grafschaft from southern Germany in 1977, report a similar experience. Although they, too, experienced an initial language shock when they first heard Platt, they stated that they never perceived their lack of knowledge of the L-variety as a huge problem:

> Mrs. D.: Das ist nicht so negativ. Wir haben uns gleich wohl gefühlt in der Grafschaft. Also, ich kann sagen, das ist meine Heimat.[249]
> (Nordhorn, March 11, 2003)

A question closely related to the presence of L in general, was the H-speakers' reaction to hearing the L-variety in "mixed company", i.e. in social situations were both H and L are spoken. That such social setups are indeed a daily occurrence in the Grafschaft was confirmed in question 39 ("Do you hear Platt in 'mixed company?"), with 90% of the H-speakers stating that they are often or sometimes in situations where both H and L are spoken. The following excerpt with Mr. C. illustrates this phenomenon:

> Mr. C.: Man kann im Prinzip sagen, dass jeder Zweite in unserem Freundeskreis Platt spricht.
> Interviewer: Dann hören Sie also oft Platt in gemischter Gesellschaft?
> Mr. C.: Das kommt immer vor. Das ist überhaupt nicht aus dem täglichen Leben zu schließen, auch bei der Arbeit.[250]
> (Emlichheim, March 12, 2003)

Question 40 then asked H-speakers whether they regard this kind of language-switching as annoying. Their answers are illustrated in figure 5.6.3:

[249] "That [not knowing Platt] is not so negative. We immediately felt at home in the Grafschaft. So, I can say that this is my home." - my translation.
[250] Mr. C.: "One can say that about every second person in our circle of friends is a Platt-speaker." Interviewer: "So, you hear Platt often in mixed society?" Mr. C.: "That happens all the time. That is a part of daily life, also at work." - my translation.

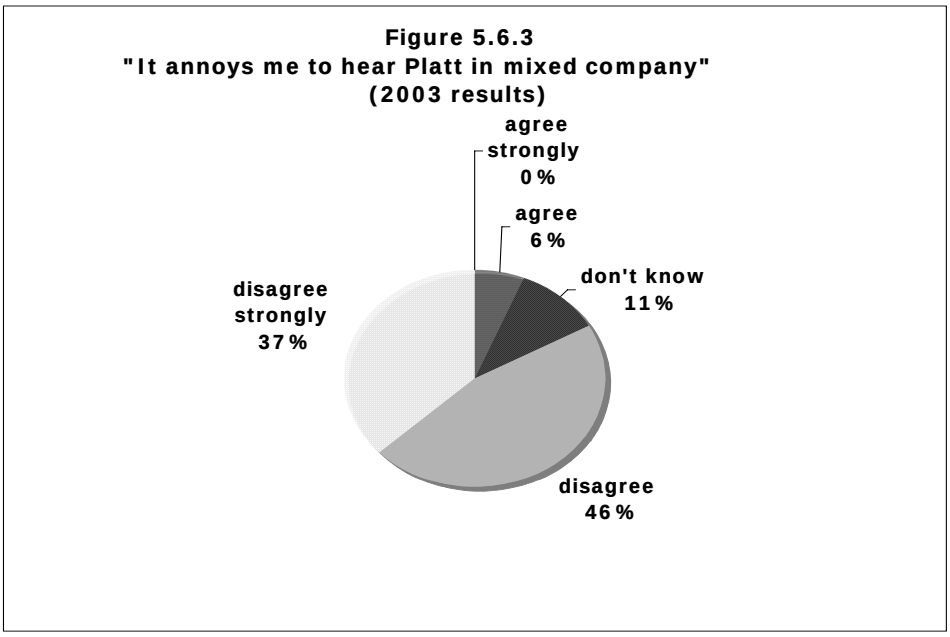


Figure 5.6.3 shows that 83 % of the H-speakers are not disturbed at all by the use of L in conversations that are carried mainly in H. The results of figure 5.6.3 must be seen in connection with those of figures 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. A good knowledge of the L-variety among H-speakers, and the socially non-exclusive function of Platt can be seen as contributing factors toward the high number of H-speakers who do not mind a language mix of H and L in conversations.

The positive attitudes of H-speakers toward the L-variety in my target area, however, cannot alter the fact that people who moved to the Grafschaft in the 1960s and 1970s did experience at first a considerable language and culture shock.[251] The language

[251] This was usually not the case with refugees from W.W.II. Many of them, due to the special circumstances after the war, were almost immediately in much closer and more direct contact with the native Grafschafter than people who moved there in the 1960s and 1970s.

barrier of not knowing the L-variety often led to frustration that sometimes lingered on for several years. In fact, some of the H-speakers who moved to the Grafschaft reported a sort of "us vs. them"-mentality that made it difficult for them to integrate into their respective communities. A good example are Mrs. D.'s experiences:

> Mrs. D.: Ich war im Krankenhaus und hatte zwei Bettnachbarn, und die sprachen beide Platt, und die haben praktisch über mich weg gesprochen. Ich war wie ein Außenseiter. Das ist wie eine Familie, diese Sprache, auch wenn die Leute Fremde sind. […] Das ist auch in anderen Situationen so. Sobald die Platt sprechen, das sind praktisch wie Kumpel. Und wer das nicht tut, der ist halt anders. […]. Die Sprache, die verbindet, also das Plattdeutsche. Als Hochdeutscher gehört man eigentlich nicht so in diese Gegend, von ihrem Standpunkt. Das ist wie ein Fremder. Aber mit Plattdeutsch sagt man dann: Aha, der gehört hier hin, das ist ein Grafschafter. Dann gehört man dazu. […]. Man bleibt durch die Sprache ein Außenseiter.[252]
> (Nordhorn, March 11, 200

Mrs. E. confirms this experience, and relates how even after having lived in the Grafschaft for a couple of years she still felt like a stranger:

[252] "I was in the hospital and had two other people in the room, and they both spoke Platt. They practically talked over my head [in Platt]. I was like an outsider. That is like a family, this language, even when the people are strangers. That is similar in other situations. As soon as they speak Platt, they are almost like buddies. And if you don't do that, then you are different. […] This language really connects people, the Low German language. As a High German [speaker] you actually don't really belong to this area, from their point of view. That is like a stranger. […]. But with Platt you are saying: Ok, that one belongs here, that is a Grafschafter. Then you belong here. […] One remains an outsider on account of the language." - my translation.

Mrs.E.: Es ist für mich immer eine fremde Sprache geblieben, die ich nicht verstanden habe und die ich nicht sprach. Ich habe immer gedacht, wenn ich es sprechen könnte, wäre auch alles einfacher. Die [Grafschafter] sprachen aber auch meine Sprache, es war halt so, dass ich ihre Sprache nicht verstehen konnte. Das ist immer so geblieben, und das heißt man bleibt immer ein Fremder.

Interviewer: Sie haben sich dann durchaus wie ein Fremder gefühlt?

Mrs. E.: Ja, […]. Das war ein ganz anderer Schlag von Menschen.[253]

(Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)

Mr. D. reported that the inability to speak the L-variety with L-speakers, e.g. when taking the car to the repair shop, prompted his interlocutors to behave in a "stiffer" and "more formal" manner than would have been the case with L-speakers.

An important factor with the H-speakers' continuing problems to integrate seems to be the L-speakers reluctance to speak the L-variety with non-natives or to even try to explain L-words or L-phrases to them. Although couple B. reports of having received considerable help from L-speakers with regards to comprehending Platt, several H-speakers complained that no attempt whatsoever was made on behalf of L-speakers to include them in conversations carried out in L. Mrs. C. states:

Mrs. C.: Mit mir wurde eigentlich immer Hochdeutsch gesprochen, also mit mir sprach man kein Platt.[254]

(Emlichheim, March 12, 2003)

[253] Mrs. E.: "It [Platt] has always remained a foreign language to me, that I didn't understand and that I didn't speak. I always thought that if I could speak it, things would be easier. They [the Grafschafter] also spoke my language, it was just, that I didn't speak theirs. That has always remained so, and that means that you always stay a stranger." Interviewer: "So, you did feel like a stranger?" Mrs. E.: "Yes, […]. They were totally different people."my translation.

[254] "They always spoke High German with me, so yes, with me they did not speak Platt." - my translation.

Mrs. E. confirms this fact and adds:

Mrs. E.:	In der Nachbarschaft sprachen immer alle Platt, immer. Das hieß für mich dann, wenn ich irgendwo hinkam, wurde immer alles abgebrochen, um mit mir dann Hochdeutsch zu reden. […] Und sie haben dann aber zu den anderen Leuten weiter Platt geredet. […] Es wurde immer sofort umgeschaltet auf Hochdeutsch, wenn ich kam. Ich bin nie ermutigt worden Platt zu lernen. Man sprach immer Hochdeutsch mit mir, und das schien auch allen Leuten recht zu sein.
Interviewer:	Hat Sie das gestört?
Mrs.E.:	Ja, da kam man sich wie ein Fremder vor.[255] (Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)

Mrs. E., however, points out that the L-speakers' unwillingness to teach H-speakers their language has its roots in a reluctance to use the H-variety in general:

[255] Mrs. E.: "Everyone in the neighborhood always spoke Platt, always. That meant for me, that when I joined them, they interrupted everything in order to speak High German with me. […] But they continued to speak Platt to the others. […] They always switched immediately into High German when I came. I was never encouraged to learn Platt. One always spoke High German with me, and that seemed to please everyone." Interviewer: "Did that bother you?" Mrs. E.: "Yes, one felt like a stranger then." - my translation.

Mrs. E.: Hochdeutsch wurde immer so gezwungermaßen gesprochen.
Interviewer: Die Leute haben sich gegen Hochdeutsch gesträubt?
Mrs. E.: Ja, man merkte schon, daß es nicht die bevorzugte Sprache war.
Interviewer: Wie hat man das denn gemerkt?
Mrs. E.: Dadurch, daß die Stimmung, die vorher [mit Platt] im Raum war, nicht mehr da war. Es wurde gezwungen und nicht mehr lustig und heiter und fröhlich. Es wurde gezwungen und formell. […] Ich meine, das ist ja auch die Sprache selber. Wenn du umschaltest von Platt auf Hochdeutsch, dann bist du formell. […] Das sieht man den Leuten auch an. Die konnten also sehr schwer sie selber sein auf Hochdeutsch. […] Sobald sie lustig und fröhlich und abschalten wollten, wurde Platt gesprochen. [256]
(Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)

L-speakers, incidentally, often confirmed Mrs. E.'s last statement by insisting that certain anecdotes, jokes, sayings, etc. simply cannot be rendered into the H-variety. This admission by the L-speakers also confirms Ferguson's distribution of domains, i.e. the H-variety clearly does not belong into the domain "Conversation with family and friends."

In this section I discussed the ability to understand or speak the L-variety as a basis for social integration in the Grafschaft Bentheim. I showed that the majority of H-speakers do not feel like outsiders when L is spoken around them (figure 5.6.2) in spite of the initial language problems many of them encountered. I also showed that the overall

[256] Mrs. E.: "High German was always spoken rather reluctantly." Interviewer: "The people refused to speak High German?" Mrs. E.: "Yes, you could definitely see that it was not the preferred language." Interviewer: "How could one notice that?" Mrs. E.: "Through the fact, that the mood that was in the room before [with Platt] just disappeared. It became rather stiff and not funny and cheerful anymore. It became stiff and formal. […] I mean, that is also the language itself. If you change from Platt into High German, then you are formal. […] And you could see that with the people. It was very difficult for them to be themselves in High German. […] If they wanted to be funny and cheerful and wanted to relax, then they spoke Platt." - my translation.

majority of H-speakers managed to at least understand the L-variety in the course of the years (figure 5.6.1), a fact that contributes to the high numbers of H-speakers not feeling annoyed or disturbed when both L and H are spoken in "mixed company" (figure 5.6.3). Finally, I discussed the continuing problems of social integration and, to a certain degree, discrimination that some H-speakers have experienced based on their inability to adequately speak the L-variety.

While this section illustrated the social nature of knowing the L-variety, the following section examines H-speakers' evaluations of the L-variety.

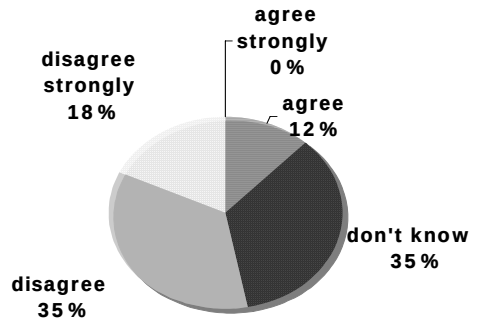
5.6.2 H-Speakers' Evaluations of the L-Variety

According to Ferguson (see 5.1), H-speakers and L-speakers alike, i.e. all members of a diglossic speech community, usually regard the L-variety as inferior to H. The matched-guise-experiments and Hundt's 1992 study discussed confirm Ferguson's point.

Ever since the decline of Platt as a written and official language (see 2.9.) in the 16th and 17th centuries, Platt has been regarded by many H-speakers as a *Bauernsprache* (peasant language) and its speakers as *rückständig* (backwards). Closely connected to these negative evaluations is the constant claim that one cannot express oneself as efficiently or as elegantly in Platt as in High German. In fact, the question of sophistication is the one argument that is leveled most often against the use of Platt and, indeed, against any L-variety. Question 31 from the questionnaire for H-speakers

inquired whether they believe in the superiority of their variety over L based on language sophistication. Their answers are illustrated in figure 5.6.4:

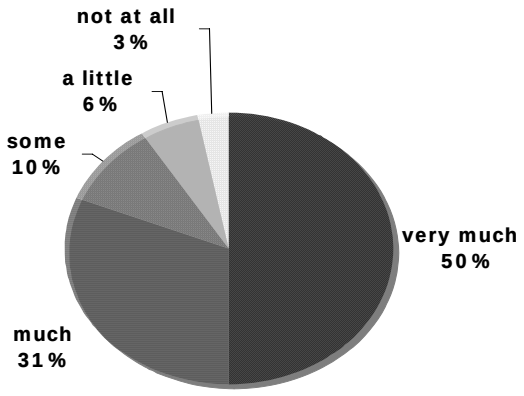
Figure 5.6.4
"People can't express themselves well in Platt because the Low German language is not as sophisticated as High German"(2003 results)



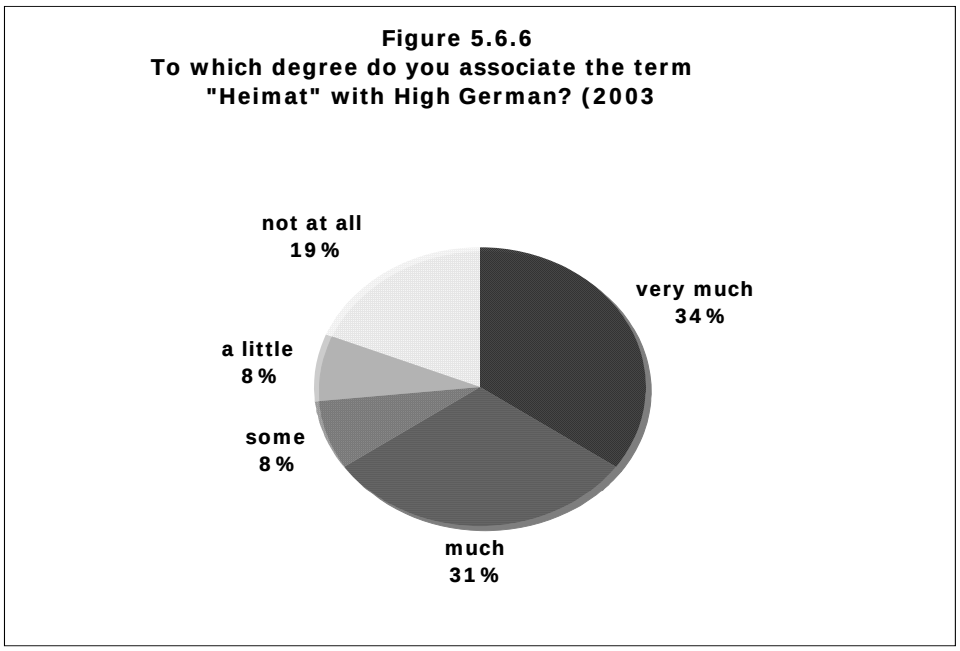
The results of figure 5.6.4 show that more than 50% of H-speakers disagree with the notion that the H-variety is more sophisticated than L. A quite high number, 35% of H-speakers, did not seem sure whether H and L are equal in terms of sophistication, while only 12% claim that H is indeed more sophisticated than L. The answers by the H-speakers of my study stand in contradiction to Ferguson's point that L is regarded as inferior and unsophisticated by the members of diglossic speech communities. This fact is strengthened even more by the H-speakers' results of my study to give an emotional evaluation of L. Question 15 from the questionnaire asked the participants to which

degree they associated the term *Heimat*[257] with Platt, while question 45 asked the opposite, i.e. how much the participants associated the term *Heimat* with High German. Their answers are in figures 5.6.5 and 5.6.6:

Figure 5.6.5
To which degree do you associate the term "Heimat" with Platt? (2003 results)



[257] The word *Heimat* usually translates as "home" in English. This, however, is an approximation, because it entails much more than the place where one lives. A better translation might be "homeland".



Figures 5.6.5 and 5.6.6 show that 81% of H-speakers clearly have an emotional attachment to the L-variety and connect its presence to the idea of *Heimat*. In fact, one can draw the conclusion that the Grafschaft would not feel like home to them *without* the presence of the L-variety. This is particularly evident in the fact that 19% of H-speakers do not associate the H-variety, after all their own language, at all with the term *Heimat*. These results are, indeed, remarkable, since, according to Ferguson (1996:29), H-speakers' aversion to the L-variety is usually such that they do not even acknowledge the existence of L. Furthermore, Hundt (1992, see section 5.5.2) has shown that Standard German speakers display consistently negative associations with the various German L-varieties. The results of the 2003 study, however, prove that H-speakers not only openly acknowledge the existence of the L-variety, but also regard it as a positive contribution to their quality of life. In other words, the H-speakers' *Heimat* would not be what it is if L did not exist.

The H-speakers of the 2003 survey extended their positive emotional assessments of the L-variety to the overall sound of L. Question 29 from the questionnaire asked H-speakers for a general emotional reaction when they hear the L-variety. The results are in table 5.4:

Table 5.4: H-Speakers' Emotional Reactions when Hearing the L-Variety

Question: When I hear Platt…	
I am always surprised that Platt is still spoken	12%
I am annoyed because I don't understand Platt	0%
I feel like I belong to the Grafschaft Bentheim	64%
I feel like I don't belong to the Grafschaft Bentheim	24%

The results from figures 5.6.5/5.6.6 and table 5.4 point to the fact that there is a significant association between the notion of *Heimat*, i.e. a feeling of belonging to a certain region, and the region's native language, which is the L-variety. Even H-speakers who experienced considerable communication problems, such as couple B., and Mrs. E., stated positive reactions when hearing the L-variety:

> Mrs. B.: Wir haben uns erstmal gewundert, dass hier so viele Platt sprechen, aber wir fanden das toll![258]
> (Nordhorn, March 11, 2003)

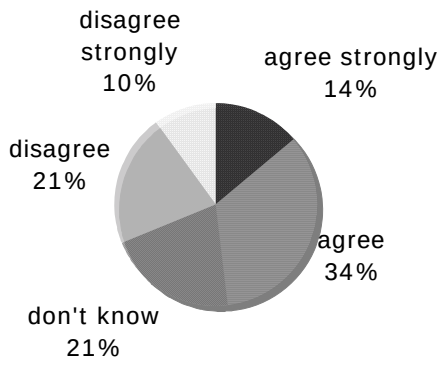
[258] Mrs. B. "At first we were surprised that so many people speak Platt, but we thought that was great!" – my translation.

Mrs. E. agrees and adds:

> Mrs. E.: Ich mag die Sprache, ich finde Platt schön. Ich habe Platt immer gerne gehört und mag es einfach nur zuzuhören.[259] (Emlichheim, March 22, 2003)

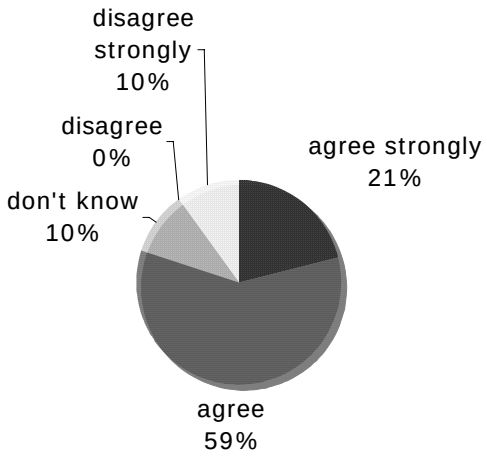
Question 49 was a hypothetical question, and asked H-speakers how they would feel in a world without Platt. Their answers illustrate that the L-variety has, indeed, become a positive element in most H-speakers' daily lives, as can be seen in charts 5.6.7 and 5.6.8:

Figure 5.6.7
"A world without Platt would be sad"



[259] Mrs. E.: "I like the language, I think Platt is pretty. […]. I always liked listening to Platt, and I enjoy just listening to it." - my translation.

Figure 5.6.8
"The world would be poorer without Platt"
(2003 results)



The results of figures 5.6.7 and 5.6.8 show once more the emotional attachment of H-speakers to the L-variety. Almost half of all surveyed H-speakers, namely 48%, would find a world in which the L-variety did not exist sad, while 80% of them think the world would be worse off without the presence of L.

The presence of Platt and the positive attitudes of H-speakers toward it have led to the rather interesting fact that many H-speakers reported to have incorporated certain L-words and phrases into their daily speech. In fact, some L-words are so omni-present in the Grafschaft that their equivalents in H are almost never used. Table 5.5 lists some of the most-used L-words from H-speakers' daily speech (based on their own account):

Table 5.5: L-Words and Phrases Used by H-Speakers

L-Variety (Platt)	H-Variety (High German)	English
fietse	Fahrrad	bicycle
döörmekaar	durcheinander	messy
unwies	sehr/total	very/ also: cool
sören	----	to talk nonsense/to talk for a very long time
Glück in't nije joar	Frohes neues Jahr	Happy new year

While the words and phrases in table 5.5 are expressions indicative of a "Pan-Grafschafter-Variety", it is worthy to note that 50% of all surveyed H-speakers reported to use L-words in their daily speech in order to show that they are *echte Grafschafter* ("real Grafschafter", i.e. people who live in the Grafschaft Bentheim and genuinely belong there). The fact that H-speakers prefer certain L-words to their respective H-counterparts shows yet again that dilgossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim is really quite different than other diglossic speech communities. It shows that the L-variety is part of H-speakers' identity as citizens of the Grafschaft Bentheim.

Additional evidence for the H-speakers' high opinion of L is the fact that many tried to learn it.[260] For instance, participant G. from Veldhausen, a 72 year-old retiree, came to the Grafschaft as a refugee from Silesia in 1946. He said that he learned to speak some Platt during his first couple of years in the Grafschaft due to his stay with various farmers after the end of W.W.II.,[261] and rather enjoyed it, as he relates here in Platt:

[260] Other newcomers, especially teachers who taught at the rural *Volksschulen* (older type of elementary school), reported that they were forced to learn enough Platt in order to communicate efficiently with their students.

[261] It was common policy back then to house refugees from the East on farms because, due to the war's destruction, available housing space was rare in post-war West-Germany.

> Ik was in de erste joar noar de krieg bi de buurn west – bi de een un de anner – un doa woard dann ook Platt proat, un doa he'ik dann ook 't Platt sowiet lernt.[262]
> (Veldhausen, February 12, 2003)

However, he stated that his opportunities to speak Platt are rather rare. Although his wife was born in the Grafschaft and speaks Platt fluently, they communicate almost entirely in Standard German, a fact he clearly regrets, as the following excerpt in High German shows:

> Ich wünsch' mir das immer, weil ich hab' selten Gelegenheit Platt zu sprechen. Mit wem auch? Ich bin nicht oft unterwegs oder im Dorf, ich geh' nicht in die Kneipen…Ja, und da hab ich mir immer gewünscht, dass wir untereinander Platt sprechen, aber das funktioniert nicht.[263]
> (Veldhausen, February 12, 2003)

In this section I discussed the H-speakers' evaluations of the L-variety. I showed that most H-speakers from my study not only rate the L-variety as equally sophisticated as the H-variety, but also that almost all of them have developed an emotional attachment to the L-variety. The H-speakers' overall positive attitudes to the L-variety expressed themselves in several ways, chiefly by associating L with the idea of *Heimat*, and by incorporating certain L-words and phrases into their daily speech. The answers by H-speakers that I presented in this section are quite incongruous with diglossic theory, i.e. with the fact that H-speakers normally despise the L-variety. In fact, my results have

[262] "I had been with the farmers in the first years after the war – with one or the other- and there they spoke Platt, and there I also learned Platt somewhat." – my translation.
[263] "I have always wished for that, because I rarely have the opportunity to speak Platt. With whom anyway? I am not often on the road or in the village, I don't go to bars… Yes, and then I have always wished that we [he and his wife] would speak Platt with each other, but that doesn't work." – my translation.

shown the opposite. They demonstrate that the overall majority of H-speakers in the Grafschaft Bentheim hold the L-variety in high regards.

We now turn to the last sub-section which explores the relationship between the L-variety and H-speakers' children, i.e. whether H-speakers would find it worthwhile for their children to learn L.

5.6.3 H-Speakers' Children and the L-Variety

Ferguson writes in his original article (1996, 30-36), that children's acquisition of H is seen by parents in diglossic speech communities as a desirable educational goal. We have seen in section 5.6.1, that the L-variety was the predominant means of communication in 1960s and 1970s[264]. However, as noted in section 4.6, at around the same time many L-speaking parents made a conscious decision to raise their children in H. This meant effectively that most children in the Grafschaft from the 1960s onward have been acquiring H as their first language. In true diglossic situations, however, children normally learn first the L-variety, as Ferguson notes in his fourth diglossic rubric "Acquisition":

> L is learned by children in what may be regarded as the 'normal' way of learning one's mother tongue, […] but the actual learning of H is chiefly accomplished by the means of formal education. (1996: 30)

We have also seen in section 4.6, that the main reasons for this switch are to be found in the overall "High-German-trend" of the 1960s and 1970s, and, especially, L-speaking

[264] This development was certainly not unique to the Grafschaft. In fact, the Grafschaft's development mirrors the general development of Platt in northern Germany. For more information, see Stellmacher (1990: 102-103).

parents' concerns that their children would not learn the H-variety well enough if they acquire L first. As Stellmacher notes:

> Die Bedenken, mit Kindern und Enkeln plattdeutsch zu sprechen, ergeben sich zweifelsfrei aus der allgemeinen Erziehungshaltung: Kinder sollen zu einem guten Hochdeutsch geführt werden und der Mundart wegen in der Schule keine Nachteile erfahren.[265] (1987:33).

Section 4.5.1 has illustrated the results of this development, namely that, according to the GETAS survey, only 8% of all surveyed parents raised their children in Platt in 1984.

In the Grafschaft Bentheim, like in so many other regions of northern Germany, acquisition of Standard German as a first language, and education in Standard German has become almost universal. My question to H-speaking and L-speaking parents then was whether they would want their children to still learn the L-variety. Since most parents are either unwilling or unable to act as transmitters of the L-variety, I asked the theoretical question whether public schools should promote and teach the L-variety. According to Ferguson (1996), and diglossic theory in general (Britto, 1986; Hudson, 2002), parents would show very negative reactions if their children were to be taught to speak or to appreciate the L-variety in public schools. With regards to the specific situation in the Grafschaft, it was to be expected that H-speaking parents, even more than L-speaking parents, would not want the L-variety to interfere with the education of their children. However, this expectation is not borne out as seen in figures 5.6.9 and 5.6.10:

[265] "The misgivings to speak Platt with children and grandchildren are no doubt due to the general attitude toward education: children are supposed to learn good High German and should experience no disadvantages in school on account of the dialect." – my translation.

Figure 5.6.9
"More efforts should be made to promote Platt in schools" (2003 results)

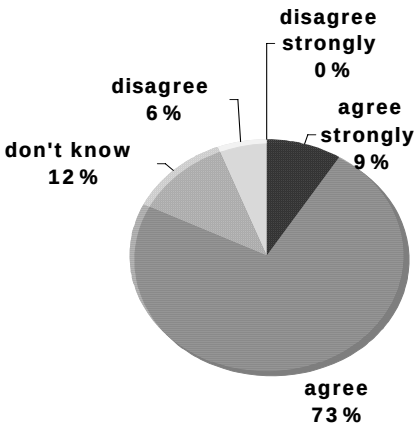
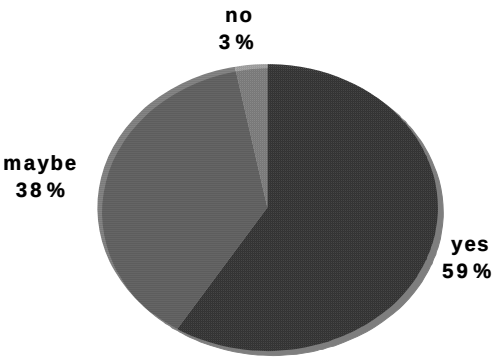


Figure 5.6.10
"I would enroll my child in Platt language classes if they were offered in schools" (2003 results)



While the results of figure 5.6.9 show that H-speaking parents want their children to appreciate the L-variety, with 83% stating that Platt should be promoted in public schools, the results of figure 5.6.10 illustrate that many H-speaking parents would vote

for Platt as an actual subject, with 59% stating that they would want their children to learn the L-variety in schools. These results are all the more remarkable if one compares the H-speakers' results for figure 5.6.9 with those of the L-speakers:

Table 5.6: Comparison of H- and L-Speakers' Results with Regards to Promotion of Platt in Public Schools

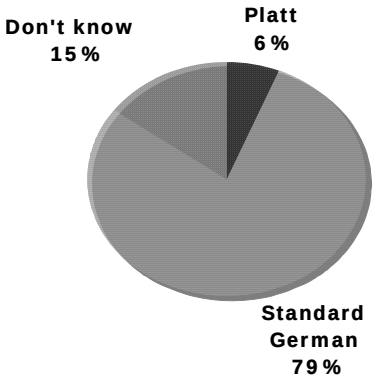
"More efforts should be made to promote Platt in schools“

	H-Speakers	**L-Speakers**
agree strongly	**9%**	41%
Agree	**74%**	54%
don't know	**12%**	1%
Disagree	**6%**	3%
disagree strongly	**0%**	1%

While the higher numbers for L-speakers in table 5.6 were to be expected, the H-speakers' results are nonetheless remarkable if one considers the fact that H-speakers in diglossia usually regard the acquisition of H as a desirable goal for their children (Ferguson, 1996: 30-36). That this is, indeed, normally the case in northern Germany can be ascertained if one takes a look at the 1984 GETAS study, which asked H- and L-speakers about the language of instruction in schools.[266] Their results are shown in figure 5.6.11:

[266] The GETAS evaluation combined the answers of H- and L-speakers. The results in figure 5.6.11 would be doubtlessly even more in favor of Standard German if the evaluators had published the H-speakers' answers to this question separately.

Figure 5.6.11
"Which language should teachers speak with first graders?" (GETAS results 1984)



The GETAS results demonstrate that the overall majority of parents, whether L- or H-speaking, do not want to see any kind of connection between public schools and the L-variety. The results from the Grafschaft Bentheim, however, show that both H- and L-speakers see the L-variety as a positive tradition worthy of their children to carry on. Figures 5.6.9 and 5.6.10 also indirectly reveal a certain regret among H-speakers that they cannot speak the L-variety and a real concern about the future of L. The H-speakers' results from the 2003 survey with regards to public schools and the L-variety are – with the possible exception of Switzerland – unique in diglossia. They show that:

a) H-speakers do not view L as an obstacle in their children's acquisition of H.

b) H-speakers want their children to be competent in L, or at least to be reasonably informed about it.

c) H-speakers regard L as a language variety that is worthy to be continued by their children.

The results of sections 5.6.1 – 5.6.3 demonstrate the unique character of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim. They also bear out the fact that H-speakers can exhibit just as much affection for and attachment to the L-variety as L-speakers do.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the language attitudes of non-Platt speakers toward Platt. In section 5.1 I pointed out that Ferguson's second diglossic rubric "prestige" is usually defined as a superiority of H over L. In section 5.2 I briefly illustrated that language attitudes, whether positive or negative, can be traced back as far as Antiquity. Section 5.3 discussed several language attitude studies from around the world as well as techniques to measure language beliefs. In section 5.4 I cited two case studies that showed the effects of negative and positive language attitudes on diglossic/bilingual communities. Section 5.5 provided an overview of language attitude studies toward German L-varieties. Finally, in section 5.6 I discussed the results from the 2003 survey and concluded that the language attitudes of H-speakers in my target area do not correspond at all with Ferguson's original point, and with diglossic theory in general.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the language attitudes of H speakers toward L are an important factor for the future of the L-variety. Another, even more important feature connected with the overall situation and, indeed, survival of the L-variety is the number of young L-speakers to which we now turn in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FUTURE OF DIGLOSSIA IN THE GRAFSCHAFT BENTHEIM

6.0 Introduction

The positive results of chapters four and five show that Platt is an essential and vital part of everyday life in the Grafschaft Bentheim. The purpose of this chapter is to determine how much longer this will be the case. The previous chapters have already shown that most parents in northern Germany – for various reasons - no longer speak Platt with their children. It is, however, the number of young speakers that determines the future of any language. This chapter discusses in detail the answers of the 573 students (ages 12-19) in the Grafschaft Bentheim, who participated in the 2003 survey.

In section 6.1 I give a brief summary about the stability of diglossia in diglossic theory. Sections 6.2 to 6.4 examine the results of previous studies (Wiggers, 1985; Robben and Robben; 1990, Kruse, 1992) on the status of Platt among young adults in northern Germany. Section 6.5.1 discusses the competence of Platt among the student-participants of the 2003 survey, while section 6.5.2 examines the appreciation of Platt among the young adults in the Grafschaft Bentheim. Section 6.6 presents the data from the 2003 study in a world-wide context, and section 6.7 discusses the status of Platt as an officially recognized minority language in the European Union. I present my conclusions in section 6.8.

6.1 The Stability of Diglossia

As mentioned in section 3.5, Ferguson lists stability as his sixth rubric diagnostic of diglossia and describes it as a stable phenomenon with a life span of "well over a thousand years" (1996: 31). I also showed in section 3.1.6 that if there is to be a language shift (i.e. a shift in domains) in a diglossic speech community, then it is usually in favor of the L-variety (Hudson, 2002; Schiffman 2002). This is, for example, true for Switzerland where the L-variety Swiss German first lost domains to the H-variety Standard German, and then at a later point in time regained these domains back from H (see also section 3.5.1). The fate of diglossic speech communities in Germany proper, however, has demonstrated that Ferguson's and Hudson's model of diglossic stability does not hold true for Germany (see section 3.5.2). In fact, the development of diglossia in Germany represents the opposite phenomenon: the steady decline or complete disappearance of L-varieties on the one hand, and the continual increase of the H-variety in almost every diglossic domain on the other hand.

I have shown in chapter two that Platt has shared this development. In fact, for almost one hundred years now researchers have predicted the imminent demise of this language. The fact that it still continues to be spoken in northern Germany, although by an ever-decreasing number of people, is proof of its popularity and the language loyalty of its speakers. Yet, how much longer will it be spoken in the north if it is not passed on

anymore to the next generation? Researchers already characterize the present situation of Platt as moribund[267], as Wirrer's remarks show:

> Wenn man sich die gegenwärtige Lage des Niederdeutschen vor Augen hält, so kommt man bei kühler Betrachtung nicht umhin, das Niederdeutsche als hochgradig moribund zu bezeichnen.[268]
> (Wirrer, 1998: 309)

Although most researchers (Sanders, 1982; Stellmacher, 1990; Wirrer, 1998) agree that the parents' decision to speak Standard German with their children is the single most threatening factor to the survival of Platt, it is, for the most part, unknown what the status of Platt among young adults really is. This is mainly due to the fact that only a few serious surveys (Wiggers, 1985; Robben and Robben, 1990; Kruse, 1992) have been carried out in the last decades to test specifically the Low German language competence and language appreciation of children and young adults in northern Germany. In addition, the last of these surveys, Kruse's 1992 study among teenagers in Emden (northern coastal region), already dates back more than a decade. The results of the 2003 survey thus will present new insights about the status of Platt in the new millennium among children and young adults.

Before I discuss the results of the 2003 survey, I will give a brief account in the next three sections about the results of previous surveys in this field, the first of which is Wiggers' 1985 study in Oldenburg.

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[267] Krauss (1992) defines *moribund* as "languages no longer learned as mother-tongue by children" (1992: 4). He further characterizes them as "beyond mere endangerment, for, unless the course is somehow dramatically reversed, they are already doomed to extinction" (1992: 4).

[268] "If you look at the present state of Low German, then you cannot help but describe it as highly moribund." – my translation.

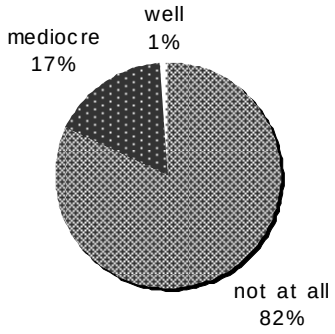
6.2 Case Study 1 – Wiggers'[269] 1985 Survey in Oldenburg

In the spring of 1985, Wiggers carried out a field study in Oldenburg (located in *Ostfriesland*, northern coastal region) and distributed questionnaires to ca. 450 students to examine the status of Platt among them.[270] His informants were students of the *Schulzentrum Alexanderstraße* ("School Centre Alexander-Street"), in which a *Orientierungsstufe*, a *Hauptschule*, a *Realschule*, and a *Gymnasium* are housed.[271]
His informants were male and female students of all four schools and between eleven and nineteen years old. According to Wiggers, they represented the average teenagers of this region (i.e. middle class and working class parents, who live in the city of Oldenburg). Through personal connections with the different schools, Wiggers was able to distribute his questionnaires in person during school time. He published his results three years later.

Similar to the GETAS survey, Wiggers relied on a self-evaluation of his informants in terms of language competence. Figure 6.2a shows the results for Low German competence of the 1985 study:

[269] No relation to this author.
[270] The exact number of informants in Wiggers'study is not known.
[271] *Orientierungsstufe* is comparable to a Middle School in the U.S., while a *Hauptschule* is usually attended by students who go on to mechanical jobs, a *Realschule* by students who go into middle management, and a *Gymnasium* by students who aim for a college education.

Figure 6.2a
How well do you speak Platt?
(Wiggers' Survey, Oldenburg, 1985)



The results of figure 6.2a confirm Wirrer's prognosis (1998) that the status of Platt is moribund. The very low number of students who speak Platt in Wiggers'study is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that Wiggers published the results of his survey only one year after the GETAS results had been (partially) published in 1987. The evaluators of the GETAS study came to the conclusion that "35% aller Befragten verfügen über gute bis sehr gute plattdeutsche Sprachkenntnisse[272]" (Stellmacher, 1987: 20). However, the fact, that none of the informants of the GETAS study were under eighteen, prompts Wiggers to ask:

[272] "35% of all informants have a good or very good command of Low German." – my translation.

> Wie ist dieser Befund angesichts des Ergebnisses der GETAS Repräsentativbefragung […] zu deuten und einzuschätzen? Doch wohl als beunruhigendes gegen null Gehen der Alterskurve.[273]
> (Wiggers, 1988: 15)

While Wiggers' results for active knowledge of Platt (i.e. speaking it) stand in contrast to the GETAS findings, his results for passive knowledge of Platt (understanding it) are not nearly as low, as figure 6.2b shows:

Figure 6.2b
How well do you understand Platt?
(Wiggers' Survey, Oldenburg, 1985)

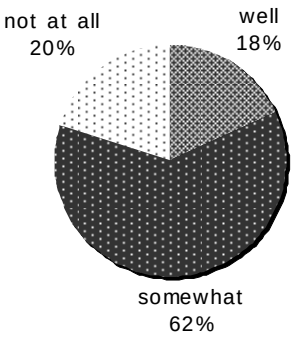


Figure 6.2b clearly shows that a passive knowledge of Platt among children and young adults is much higher than the active one. Stellmacher (1990) confirms this and adds that this trend does not have to be entirely negative:

[273] "How is this [his] result to be interpreted and to be evaluated in light of the positive findings of the GETAS study? Only so, that the age-curve [in terms of language competence] is disturbingly slanted toward zero." – my translation.

> Der Satz *ich kann nicht Platt sprechen, verstehe es aber* ist immer wieder zu hören und steht für die Möglichkeiten, über die das Niederdeutsche noch verfügt.[274] (Stellmacher, 1990: 101)

According to Wiggers, the answers of male and female students showed no significant differences. The only noteworthy social factor in terms of language competence was that children of working class families spoke Platt "ein wenig besser als der Durchschnitt." ("a little better than the average" – my translation; Wiggers: 1988: 16)

Wiggers concluded his study with a question about his informants' appreciation of Platt. The results for this question are shown in figure 6.2c:

Figure 6.2c
What do you think of Platt?
(Wiggers' Survey, Oldenburg, 1985)

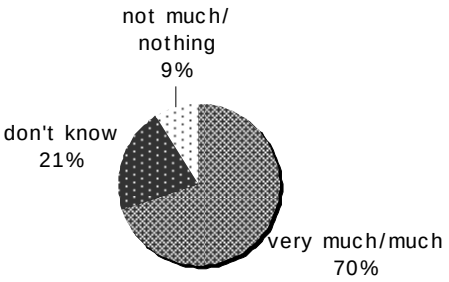


Figure 6.2c illustrates that the image of Platt among Wiggers' informants is quite good. In fact, 73% of all informants thought of Platt as "eine erhaltenswerte Sprache." ("a language worth preserving" – my translation; Wiggers: 1988: 17) The mixed results from his survey led Wiggers to the following conclusion:

[274] "You can hear the sentence *I don't speak Platt but I understand it* over and over again. It shows the possibilities that Low German still has at its disposal." – my translation.

> Um das Plattdeutsche steht es […] bei weitem nicht so gut, wie mancher meint, nicht ganz so schlecht, wie mancher fürchtet.[275] (Wiggers, 1988: 18)

In this section I discussed the results of Wiggers' 1985 survey about the Low German language competence and language appreciation among teenagers in Oldenburg. I showed that the active knowledge of Platt of Wiggers' informants was near zero, while the passive knowledge was still relatively wide-spread. Finally, I showed that Platt enjoyed quite a good image among children and young adults in Oldenburg. We now turn to the results of the next survey, Robben and Robben's 1990 study in the Emsland.

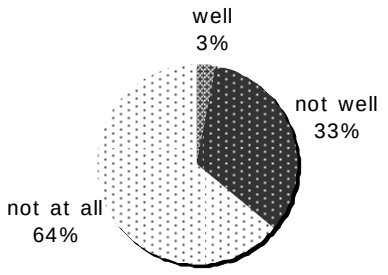
6.3 Case Study 2 – Robben and Robben's 1990 Survey in the Emsland

The study by Robben and Robben is of particular interest for this work, since the target area, *das Emsland*, borders on the Grafschaft Bentheim in the south-east. Both counties have a similar infrastructure (rural, little technology) and their respective L-varieties, Emsländer Platt and Grafschafter Platt, show many similar features though they are not identical. Robben and Robben's survey is of a far larger scope than any other study in this field. With the help of local school administrations and teachers in the Emsland county, Robben and Robben managed to survey every fourth grader in the entire district (3,184 informants). Unlike Wiggers' study or the GETAS survey, Robben and Robben conducted an actual language competence test with their informants. The students were asked to translate a Low German text, which was played to them on tape, into Standard German. The students then were asked to translate some Standard German

[275] "The situation of Platt is by far not as good as some people think, and not really as bad as some people fear." - my translation.

words (verbs, nouns, adjectives) into Platt.[276] Similar to Wiggers, Robben and Robben tested the informants on their active and passive command of Platt. The results for their informants' active command of Platt are shown in figure 6.3a:

Figure 6.3a
How well do you speak Platt?
(Robben and Robben's Survey
Emsland, 1990)



The results from figure 6.3a are quite similar to Wiggers' results from 1985. The biggest difference here is that more than 80% of all informants in Wiggers' study did not speak Platt at all, while the results for the same category in Robben and Robben's study is slightly lower at 64.1%. By having their informants listen to a text in Platt and then asking them to translate it into Standard German, Robben and Robben were able to elucidate quite accurate figures for the passive command of Platt among their subjects. The results for their informants' passive command of Platt are shown in figure 6.3b:

[276] A copy of Robben and Robben's texts and words used in their testing is unfortunately not available, nor do they explain in their article which criteria they used for their evaluations.

Figure 6.3b
How well do you understand Platt?
(Robben and Robben's Survey
Emsland, 1990)

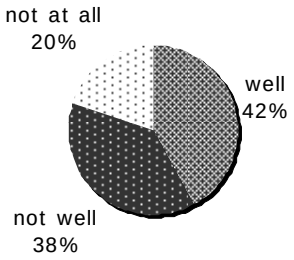


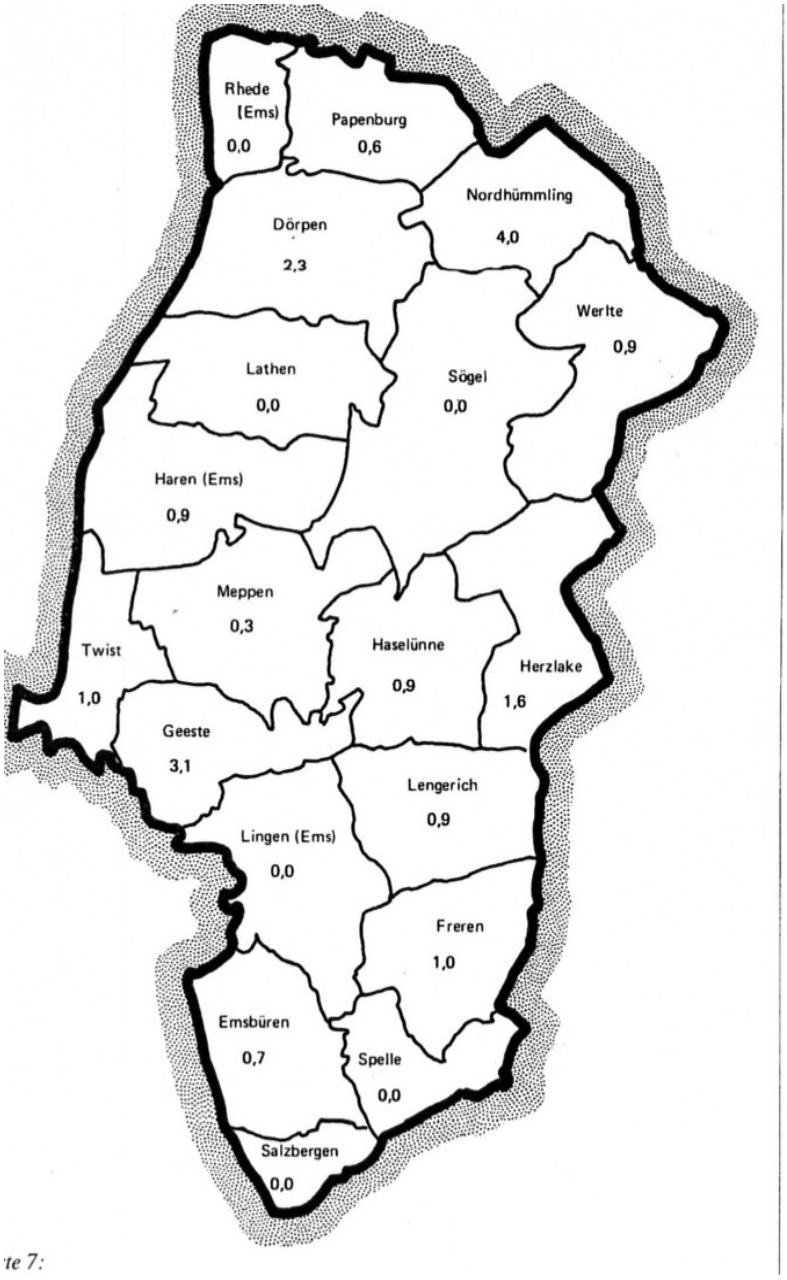
Figure 6.3b shows that the fourth graders' passive command of Platt in the Emsland is much higher than that of their peers in Oldenburg (Wiggers'1985 study). This is mainly due to the fact that, similar to the Grafschaft, the Emsland is mostly a rural community with only a few medium-sized towns. Robben and Robben found out that their results showed a considerable "Stadt-Land-Gefälle" (town-country divide). For example, while only 14.4% were able to understand Platt well in Lingen, a town of about 30.000 inhabitants, more than 50% could understand it well in rural communities, such as Lengerich or Geeste. Oldenburg, by comparison, had ca. 140.000 inhabitants at the time of Wiggers' survey.

The low results for Low German competence among Robben and Robben's informants can be explained by the language habits of their parents. Parallel to the tests for fourth graders, Robben and Robben also surveyed the parents of their informants by asking them to fill out questionnaires about their language-habits with their children (i.e.

Platt or High German). At the end of the survey, 2.985 parents had filled out the questionnaires, so that, once again, Robben and Robben were able to come up with fairly accurate and realistic findings.[277] Based on the parents' answers, map 6.1 shows the percentage of fathers who regularly speak Platt with their children in the Emsland (divided into districts):

[277] Copies of the questionnaires for parents are unavailable.

Map 6.1: Percentage of Fathers who Regularly Speak Platt with their Children (1990 Survey)[278]

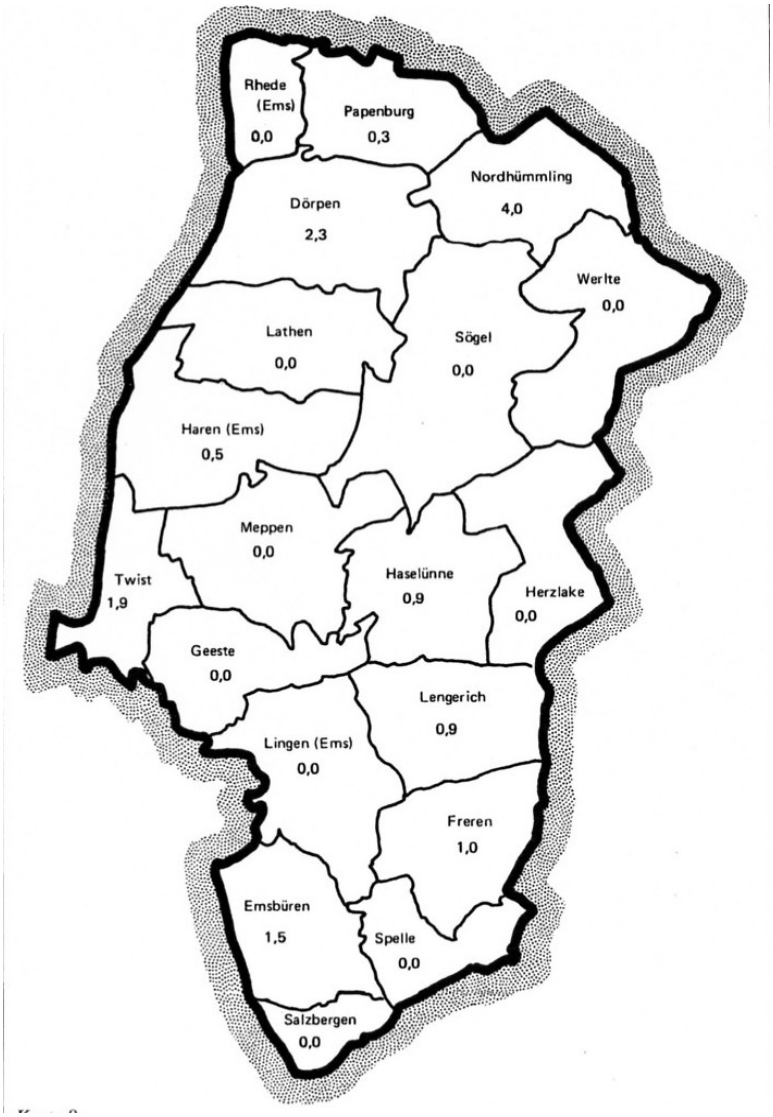


te 7:

[278] Robben and Robben (1993: 109).

These alarmingly low results, with only one county at 4% (the highest result) and six counties at 0%, are matched by the percentage of mothers who speak regularly Platt with their children, as shown in map 6.2:

Map 6.2: Percentage of Mothers who regularly Speak Platt with their Children (1990 survey)[279]



[279] Robben and Robben (1993: 110).

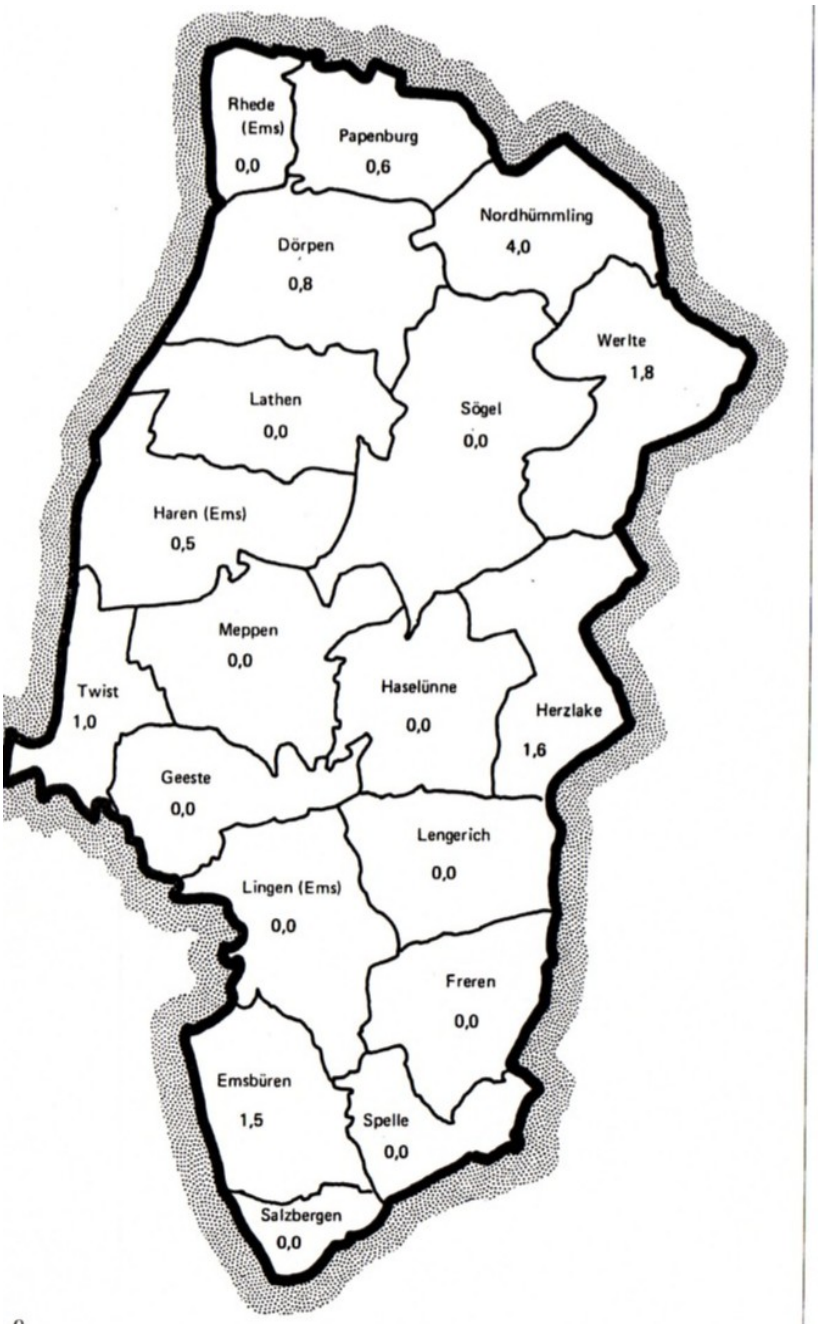
A comparison of the two maps shows that there is virtually no difference at all between the language habits of mothers and fathers in the Emsland. Almost 100% of both groups speak High German only with their children. Robben and Robben's study also showed that farmers, usually seen as one of the last propagators of Platt, speak Platt only slightly more often on a regular basis with their children than parents of other professions. The breakdown of professions and Platt usage with children is illustrated in table 6.1:

Table 6.1: Professions and Usage of Platt with Children (1990 Survey)

Profession	Always Platt	Mostly Platt	Mostly Standard German	Always Standard German	Not answered
Farmers	0.0%	3.7%	23.8%	72.1%	0.4%
Workers	0.4%	0.7%	6.6%	90.2%	2.1%
Middle Management	0.3%	0.0%	3.3%	93.5%	2.8%

Table 6.1 illustrates that only a very insignificant percentage of the parents – regardless of profession – speak Platt "always" or "mostly" with their children. Given the parents' extremely low results, it really can hardly surprise that the Low German competence of their children is almost zero. This is also clearly evident in the fact that children do not speak Platt among each other, as can be seen in map 6.3:

Map 6.3: Percentage of Children who Speak Platt among Each Other (1990 Survey)[280]



[280] Robben and Robben (1993: 111).

Finally, Robben and Robben asked about the parents' appreciation of the Low German language.[281] In order to elucidate valuable data, Robben and Robben asked the parents whether schools should make more efforts to promote Platt. Similar to the results of my 2003 survey (see section 5.6.3), most parents (65%) wished for schools to impart to their children at least an understanding of Platt. Robben and Robben interpret this high number as parents' compunction about raising their children in Standard German:

> Es darf […] vermutet werden, dass die Eltern, nachdem sie ihre Kinder mehr oder minder ausschließlich in der Hochsprache bis ins schulfähige Alter erzogen haben, nun doch der Schule zubilligen oder sogar von ihr wünschen, dass sie die Heranwachsenden an die Mundart heranführe.[282] (Robben and Robben, 1993: 119)

In this section I discussed Robben and Robben's 1990 study about fourth graders' language competence of Platt in the Emsland. I pointed out that Robben and Robben's survey is quite valuable since the Emsland is geographically close to the Grafschaft Bentheim, and also because of the scope and methodology of their study. I showed that, similar to Wiggers' results from Oldenburg (1985), the active command of Platt among children in the Emsland is almost zero, while their passive command is somewhat higher than that of their peers in Oldenburg. I also discussed the language habits of informants' parents in Robben and Robben' study and demonstrated that – regardless of profession or social standing – only a very low number of parents speak Platt on a regular basis with their children. Finally, I pointed to the fact that the parents' desire for schools to promote

[281] Given their relatively young age (10-11), the fourth graders were not asked about language appreciation.

[282] "It can be argued that parents, after raising their children in the standard language, allow schools or even demand of them to introduce their children to Low German." - my translation

Platt can be interpreted as a wish to compensate for their own lack of Platt usage with their children. The following chapter discusses the results of one of the latest surveys, Kruse's 1992 study in Emden.

6.4. Case Study 3 – Kruse's 1992 Survey in Emden

Kruse conducted her study with the help of students from a twelfth-grade German course of the Johannes-Althusius-Gymnasium in the city of Emden (also in *Ostfriesland*, northern coastal region). Kruse and her volunteers distributed questionnaires to a total of 589 students in and around Emden. Their informants were male and female fourth-graders, eighth-graders, and twelfth-graders from several school types (*Grundschule* [elementary school], *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, and *Gymnasium*). Similar to the two previous studies, Kruse asked her informants primarily about their active and passive command of Platt. However, similar to the GETAS study, Kruse defined even those informants as Platt speakers who could only speak it "ein bisschen" ("a little bit").[283] It is therefore not surprising that the number of Platt speakers in her study is much higher than those of the previous surveys with a total of 34.4%. Even higher was Kruse's percentage of informants with a passive command of Platt, which came to a total of 64.1%.[284] In spite of these evaluative deficiencies, Kruse's study offers some interesting insights about the appreciation of Low German among her informants. Almost 84% of

[283] For this reason, I refrained from discussing her numbers by using figures.
[284] Again, this number included those informants who professed to understand Platt "ein bisschen" ("a little bit"). Similar to Robben and Robben's study, there exists a considerable town-country divide in Kruse's study. However, due to the evaluative methods of her study I refrained from discussing this in depth.

the fourth-graders said that they liked Platt, while 75% of the eighth-graders stated that they would find the death of Platt "sehr bedauerlich" ("very regrettable"). Among the twelfth-graders, 100% stated that they would find a world without Platt very regrettable, while almost 50% of them asserted that they would either like to learn Platt or to expand their existing knowledge of the language. These high numbers with regard to language appreciation led Kruse to a quite positive conclusion:

> "Dieses Ergebnis bestätigt die steigende Beliebtheit des Dialekts."[285]
> (Kruse, 1993: 73)

To summarize the three previous sections: The surveys (with the exception of Kruse's) have shown that the active command of Platt among teenagers in northern Germany, i.e. the ability to speak it well, is next to zero. The studies have also demonstrated that the passive command of Platt among young adults, i.e. the ability to understand it well, is considerably higher than their active command. Finally, the results of the surveys have indicated that there exists a correlation between rural areas and the ability to speak or understand Platt well. The following section presents and discusses the results from the 2003 survey.

[285] "These results confirm the rising popularity of the dialect." – my translation.

6.5 The 2003 Survey in the Grafschaft Bentheim

I surveyed a total of 573 students from three different schools: the *Realschule* in Emlichheim, a *Gymnasium* in Neuenhaus, and a *Kaufmännische Berufsschule* (Vocational School for Business) in Nordhorn. Two of these schools belong geographically to the *Niedergrafschaft* (Lower Grafschaft Bentheim; Emlichheim and Neuenhaus, both ca. 13.000 inhabitants)[286], while the Berufsschule in Nordhorn (ca. 52.500 inhabitants at the time of the survey) belongs to the *Obergrafschaft* (Upper Grafschaft Bentheim). The number of male and female students was more or less equal (47% male, 53% female), and the ages of the students ranged from twelve to nineteen. It was relatively easy for me, due to personal connections, to gain access to the various schools. With the help of the respective principals and several teachers I distributed my questionnaires (see Appendix C *Schülerfragebogen*) to the students during school time (see Appendix C), and collected them two days later. In total, 253 students of the Realschule in Emlichheim, 172 students from the Gymnasium in Neuenhaus, and 148 students from the Berufsschule in Nordhorn participated in this survey.[287] Due to a lack of resources and time I relied on self-evaluations in terms of language competence.

[286] These numbers refer to the *Samtgemeinde Emlichheim* and *Samtgemeinde Neuenhaus*, i.e. they include the surrounding, incorporated villages that were formerly (until the early 1970s) independent.

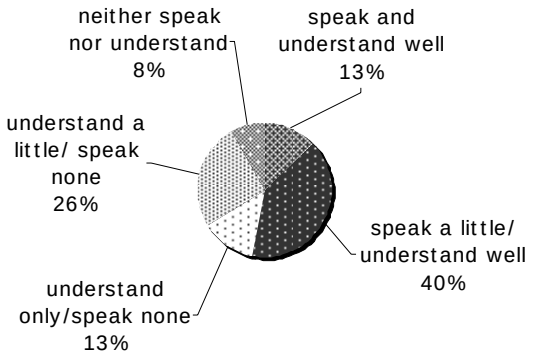
[287] This number includes students of foreign origin (Russia, Turkey, etc.). Their total percentage was ca. 3%. I decided to include these students, even though they obviously do not speak Platt, because they reflect the growing population changes in the target area.

Section 6.5.1 examines the students' results for Low German competence, while section 6.5.2 discusses language appreciation and language preferences among my participants.

6.5.1 Students' Competence of Low German (2003 Results)

Question number one from the questionnaire asked the students about their active and passive command of Platt (i.e. speaking and understanding). The results are shown in figure 6.5a:

Figure 6.5a
How well can you speak and understand Platt?
(2003 Survey, Total Results)



The results of the 2003 survey show that the situation in the Grafschaft Bentheim is only slightly better than those in Oldenburg and the Emsland. Only 13% of all informants claim to have a good active command of Platt, while a much larger number, namely 40%, states to have a good passive command of the language. A direct comparison with the results from Oldenburg and the Emsland, however, shows that the status of Platt among young adults in the Grafschaft, though precarious, is not quite as bad as elsewhere:

Table 6.2: Comparison of Active and Passive Platt Speakers among Young Adults

Percentage	**Oldenburg (1985)**	**Emsland (1992)**	**Grafschaft Bentheim (2003)**
Active Speakers	1%	3%	**13%**
Passive Speakers	18%	42.3%	**40%**

Although the results from the Grafschaft look somewhat impressive compared to the other surveys, they cannot belie the fact that 13% is a disturbingly low number. Moreover, my results demonstrate an extreme town-country divide. In fact, if it had not been for the two schools in the Lower Grafschaft, the results would have looked very similar to those of Oldenburg and the Emsland. Figures 6.5b and 6.5c show the results for question number one again, this time for the Realschule Emlichheim and for the Berufsschule Nordhorn respectively:

Figure 6.5b
How well can you speak and understand Platt?
(Realschule Emlichheim, 2003)

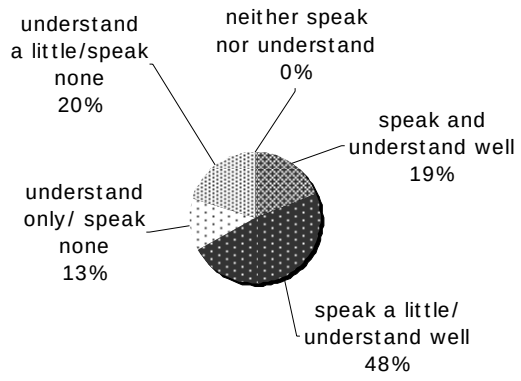
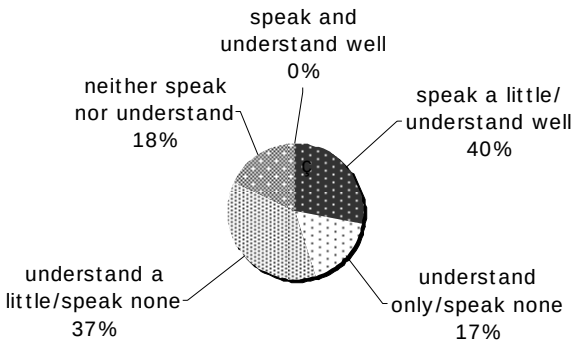


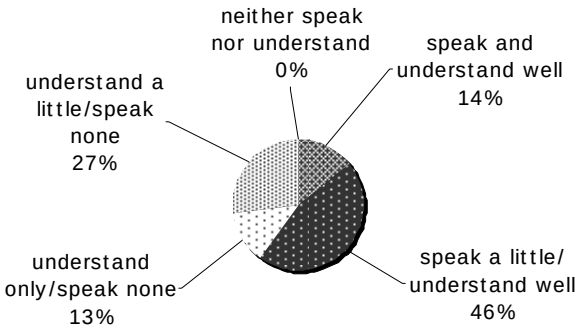
Figure 6.5c
How well can you speak and understand Platt?
(Berufsschule Nordhorn, 2003)



Figures 6.5b and 6.5c prove that the more urbanized the area, the lower is the number of active, young Platt speakers. Indeed, the results from Nordhorn are even lower than those from Oldenburg and the Emsland. The results from the Gymnasium Neuenhaus,

which lies halfway between Nordhorn and Emlichheim, are somewhat in-between the previous two schools, as figure 6.5d shows:

Figure 6.5d
How well can you speak and understand Platt?
(Gymnasium Neuenhaus, 2003)



The huge town-country divide for question number one expresses itself most prominently in the fact that the number of informants who neither understand nor speak Platt is zero percent in both Emlichheim and Neuenhaus, while it amounts to eighteen percent in Nordhorn. On the other hand, more than ten percent of the student-informants professed to speak and understand Platt well in Emlichheim and Neuenhaus (19% and 14% respectively), while this figure was zero in Nordhorn. These results confirm predictions (Kremer, 2003) that Platt will remain much longer viable in the *Niedergrafschaft* than in the more urbanized *Obergrafschaft*.

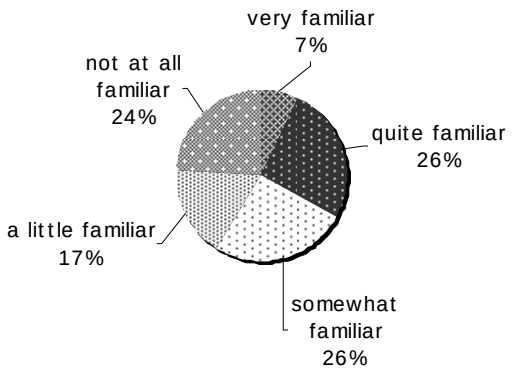
This section examined the Low German competence of student-participants from the 2003 study. I showed that the active language competence of teenagers and young adults in the Grafschaft Bentheim is higher than those of their peers in the Emsland or in

Oldenburg. The overall higher results for the Grafschaft, however, are due to the fact that the *Niedergrafschafter* participants, especially in Emlichheim, have a much higher active and passive competence of Platt than their peers in the *Obergrafschaft*. The following section examines the appreciation of Platt among the student-participants of the 2003 survey.

6.5.2 Students' Appreciation of Low German (2003 Results)

Question eleven from the questionnaire asked students how familiar they are with Low German in general. Their answers, shown in figure 6.5e, demonstrate that slightly more than 40% of all participants profess little to no familiarity with Platt:

Figure 6.5e
How familiar is Platt to you?
(Total Results, 2003)



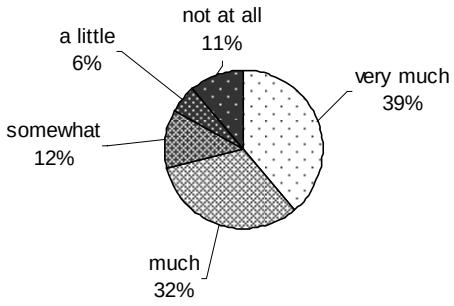
Considering the town-country divide in terms of language competence (see section 6.5.1), it is rather interesting that the results for figure 6.5e showed virtually no differences between the Lower- and the Upper Grafschaft.

This, however, might be explained by the fact that, similar to Robben and Robben's 1990 study, High German is by far the preferred language in conversations among young adults regardless of location. Indeed, 95% of all participants stated that they use High German exclusively for any interaction with their peers. This was confirmed by the answers of the Emlichheimer students, who, although they have a relatively high active command of Platt, declared that they reserve their Platt usage with family members, specifically grand-parents, but hardly ever speak it in the schoolyard.[288]

The low numbers from figure 6.5e are, however, somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that many students associate Platt with the notion of home. Similar to the questionnaires for Platt speakers and non-speakers (see section 5.6.2), I asked students to what degree they associate Platt with the term *Heimat*[289]. Their answers to this question are illustrated in figure 6.5f:

[288] Only twenty years ago this situation was quite different in Emlichheim, when one could hear frequently Platt in the schoolyard and even in classrooms.
[289] The word *Heimat* usually translates as "home" in English. This, however, is an approximation because it entails much more than the place where one lives, such as family, friends, neighbors, customs, dialect, etc. A better translation might be "homeland".

Figure 6.5f
To which degree do you associate the term "Heimat" with Platt? (Total Results, 2003)



Given the quite low competence of the L-variety among students, these results are quite remarkable. Similar to the answers of the Non-Platt speakers, the students' outcome shows that Platt, regardless of the competence level, is a crucial factor in defining the term *Heimat*. In fact, a direct comparison with the answers by the non-Platt speakers to the same question reveals that the latter scored only slightly higher, as table 6.3 shows:

Table 6.3: Platt and *Heimat*: Comparison of Students' Answers and Non-Platt Speakers' Answers[290]

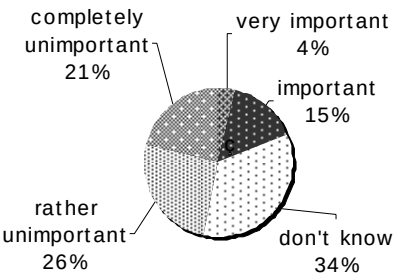
"To which degree do you associate the term "Heimat" with Platt?"		
	Non-Speakers	**Students**
very much	50%	**39%**
much	31%	**32%**
some	10%	**12%**
a little	6%	**6%**
not at all	3%	**11%**

In addition, similar to figure 6.5e, the results from figure 6.5f showed no significant town-country divide. In other words, Platt was associated with *Heimat* to a quite high degree by all participants regardless of location.

The positive results for question eleven, however, did not extend to questions of pure language appreciation. Indeed, it was in this area that the results of the 2003 survey were, in effect, worse than in any previous survey. For example, question seven from the students' questionnaire asked students whether Platt occupies an important part in their lives. Their answers are shown in figure 6.5g:

[290] This table reflects the age difference only with regards to the question of Platt and Heimat, it does not reflect competence of Platt.

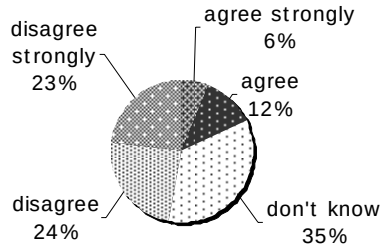
Figure 6.5g
How important is Platt for you?
(Total Results, 2003)



The results for question seven revealed again a sharp town-country divide with 24% of the Emlichheimer students stating that Platt is "very important" or "important" to them, compared to only 0.7% of the Nordhorner students who thought that Platt was "very important" and 8% from the same group who felt that Platt is "important" to them.

Similar to the questionnaires for Platt speakers and Non-Platt Speakers (see Appendix A and B, and section 5.6.2), I asked students how they would evaluate a world without Platt. Figure 6.5h shows their answers to this hypothetical question:

Figure 6.5h
A world without Platt would be sad
(Total Results, 2003)



Although the results from the different schools confirmed yet again the existing town-country divide (22% of the Emlichheimer students who answered "agree strongly" or "agree" to this question vs. 6% of the Nordhorner students), the overall result for this question demonstrates quite clearly that a world without Platt is not only conceivable for the students of the 2003 survey, but that it also would not bother them much. This result is all the more noteworthy since student-participants of previous surveys on Low German (Kruse, 1992) have expressed quite a concern for the future of Platt. For instance, Kruse's (1992) question *"Das Aussterben der plattdeutschen Sprache wäre sehr bedauerlich"* ("The extinction of the Low German language would be very regrettable") met with considerable agreement among her participants. Since Kruse's question is almost identical in content to figure 6.5h from the 2003 survey, a direct comparison of the results, shown in table 6.4, is quite revealing:

Table 6.4: Comparison of Kruse's 1992 Survey and the 2003 Survey

"A world without Platt would be sad"				
	Realschule Emlichheim (2003)	**Berufsschule Nordhorn (2003)**	**Eighth-Graders Emden (1992)**	**Twelfth-Graders Emden (1992)**
agree	22%	**6%**	75%	**100%**
don't know	41%	**30%**	0%	**0%**
disagree	37%	**64%**	25%	**0%**

The results from table 6.4 clearly illustrate that the twelfth-graders of Emden (right column) showed a concern for the future of Platt in 1992. This concern, however, has turned into a disconcern within a time period of only eleven years, as can be seen by the results from the Berufsschule Nordhorn in 2003. This trend cannot be explained by a town-country divide, since Emden had almost as many inhabitants at the time of Kruse's study (ca. 51.500 in 1992) as Nordhorn had at the time of my 2003 study (ca. 52.500). Instead, this development among young adults is indicative of the rapid erosion Platt has been experiencing in the last decades. The low appreciation for Platt and the disconcern about its future among teenagers is also quite visible when it comes to a direct comparison between Standard German and Platt. Question nine from the questionnaire asked the participants whether Standard German sounds overall more sophisticated than Platt. The results for this question are illustrated in figure 6.5i:

Figure 5.6i
High German sounds more polite and more beautiful than Platt
(Total Results, 2003)

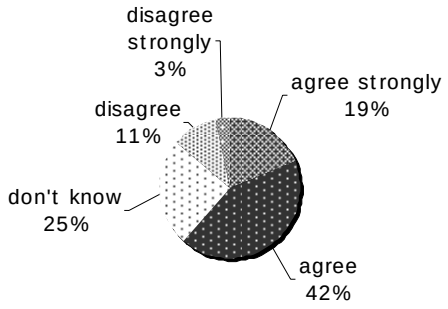
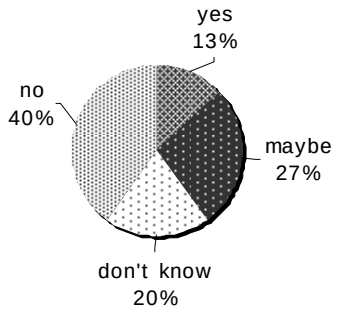


Figure 6.5i shows a decidedly negative image of Platt among teenagers with more than 60% stating that Standard German sounds more beautiful and more polite. In addition, the results for this question did not show the usual town-country divide, i.e. Standard German was generally favored by participants regardless of their location. From these results one can draw the conclusion that the negative terms Platt has been associated with for centuries ("backward" and "peasant language", see also section 5.6.2), have been carried over into the 21st century.

The low status of Platt among teenagers and their indifference toward its future are also evidenced in their overall unwillingness to make any attempts to learn Platt. Question fourteen from the questionnaire asked the hypothetical question whether the participants would enroll in Low German language classes if they were offered in their respective schools:

Figure 6.5j
I would enroll in Platt language classes if they were offered at school
(Total Results, 2003)



While it must be granted that additional schoolwork usually does not carry very popular notions among teenagers, the results from figure 6.5j demonstrate nonetheless that the Low German language is, in general, not popular among young adults in the Grafschaft Bentheim.[291]

The consequences of the precarious status of Platt among teenagers and young adults for the general diglossic situation in northern Germany are characterized by Kremer (2003) who defines the current condition of Low German as *labile Diglossie* ("unstable diglossia", Kremer, 2003:139). Furthermore, Kremer (2003) predicts that

> In etwa zwei Generationen dürfte es […] so gut wie keine aktiven Dialektsprecher mehr geben.[292] (Kremer, 2003: 139)

[291] It would be interesting in this respect to measure the status of the English language among teenagers. Given the enormous popularity of American and British pop culture in the Grafschaft Bentheim, it stands to reckon that English would fare much better than Platt did.

[292] "Two generations from now there won't be any active dialect speakers anymore." – my translation.

A likely scenario, according to Kremer, will be that the northern German *Umgangssprache* ("colloquial speech", see also section 3.5.2) will eventually replace Platt as L-variety. Although Kremer (2003:147/148) points out that the *Umgangssprache* is partly based on a Low German substrate (see also *Missingsch*, section 4.3), such a scenario would, in effect, mean the end of pure diglossia in northern Germany and the end of Platt as an L-variety.

In this section I discussed the appreciation of Platt among the student-participants from the 2003 survey. I showed that Platt occupies a very low status among young adults, and also pointed out that only slightly more than a decade ago (Kruse's 1992 study) this was not yet the case. I concluded that this negative trend does not bear well for the future of Platt and showed that other researchers, such as Kremer (2003) believe that the low competence and appreciation of Platt among young adults will eventually lead to the extinction of Platt in northern Germany.

The results of my 2003 study have demonstrated that the chances of survival for Low German's current endangered state are rather doubtful. It would be erroneous, however, to view the data from and predictions for Platt as an isolated phenomenon. In fact, the erosion of minority languages is a world-wide phenomenon that has been taking place on an unprecedented scale during the last decades. It is therefore necessary to view the data from Platt in a world-wide context to which we now turn in section 6.6.

6.6 The Data from the 2003 Survey in a World-Wide Context

It is not a new phenomenon that languages die out. Even such considerably influential languages as Latin or Sanskrit went eventually out of use. One might say then that language extinction is a natural event. What is new, however, is that languages, particularly minority languages, have been becoming moribund or extinct at an alarming rate since the mid-twentieth century. In fact, the problem of dying languages has become so epidemic that it constitutes its own field now in linguistic research and has produced numerous publications (Krauss, 1992; Grenoble and Whaley, 1998; Nettle and Romaine, 2000; Crystal, 2000; Daley, 2003, to name just a few). On the other hand, language death is an issue whose complexities reach far beyond linguistics, as it is inter-connected with such disciplines as history (particularly Colonial Studies), economics, and anthropology. It would go beyond the scope of this work to investigate the many different reasons that lead to language death. Rather, this section intends to examine the erosion of Platt in the context of the world-wide problem of language death. The following section presents a short overview on the extent of this phenomenon.

6.6.1 The Scope of Language Erosion among Minority Languages

The task to document and to identify language death is quite a difficult one which becomes apparent at once by the fact that nobody knows how many languages presently exist in the world. Estimates range from 5,000 to 6,700 (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:7). The *Ethnologue*, which constitutes the largest on-going survey of the world's languages, lists the number of known living languages at 6,912 in its latest edition (2005). Most

researchers (Krauss, 1992; Nettle and Romaine, 2000; Crystal, 2000) believe the number to be at around 6,000. This figure is, however, still an approximation and not without criticism. For instance, Crystal (2000) refers to it as an "off-the-cuff figure" (2000: 4). There are several reasons for this problem. According to Nettle and Romaine (2000: 29-31) and Crystal (2000: 5), almost half to the world's languages have never been properly documented or surveyed. This is partly due to the fact that most linguists confine themselves to only one language or sometimes a handful of related languages, and partly because linguists mainly tend to focus on European languages. For example, Nettle and Romaine (2000: 27) point out that even trained linguists can usually not name more than a hundred languages. Another reason is the rather persisting issue of dialects and languages, i.e. at what point is a dialect considered to be a language. The most commonly accepted definition of a dialect at present is "two speech systems […] of the same language that are (predominately) mutually intelligible" (Crystal, 2000: 8). However, political issues often interfere with this definition. In Europe, for example, Norwegian and Danish, or Serbian and Croatian are both mutually intelligible. Serbian and Croatian even formed a single language, Serbo-Croatian, until the beginning of the civil wars in the 1990s. Yet, due to political reasons (the need for statehood, civil strife), Danish, Norwegian, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian are all acknowledged now as national languages. Finally, a proper documentation of the world's languages is hampered by the fact that, according to Nettle and Romaine (2000: 28), no less than 39,000 different names exist for the world's approximately 6,000 languages. Platt itself is a good example for this phenomenon since it goes by at least five different names in

Germany (*Platt* and *Plattdütsch* by its speakers; *Niederdeutsch* and *Plattdeutsch* by Standard German speakers; and *Neuniederdeutsch* by philologists). In spite of these problems of documenting and identifying languages, there have been some alarming developments concerning the minority languages and lesser known languages of the world. Here are some of the most important facts and predictions from the most recent research literature:

a) The world's top eight languages (Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, English, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Japanese) are spoken by nearly 2.4 billion people (Crystal, 2000:14). Approximately 3.2 billion people – more than half the world's population – speak the world's top twenty languages (Crystal, 2000: 14). According to Crystal (2000:14), if one continues this analysis downwards one would eventually find that 5% of the world's approximately 6,000 languages (ca. thirty languages) are spoken by 95% of the world's population. In other words, the top thirty to thirty-five languages are spoken by ca. 5.7 billion speakers, and roughly 5,960 languages are spoken by ca. 300 million speakers.

b) The vast majority of people who speak one of the top thirty languages has left minority languages and lesser known languages in acute danger of extinction within the next decades. However, researchers' predictions on the number of languages in danger of extinction vary greatly. While Nettle and Romaine (2000:7) estimate that about half of the world's languages will die out in the 21st century, Crystal (2000: 15) believes that around 4,000 languages are

endangered. Krauss (1992) even thinks that this "century will see either the death or the doom of 90% of mankind's languages" (1992:7). According to Dalby (2003: ix), this figure translates to one language death every two weeks in this century.

c) Most minority languages become extinct at the expense of a language with more speakers or a language that is regarded as more prestigious. No other language has been so crucial in this development than English (Dalby, 2003: ix-x).[293] In fact, Krauss (1992) estimates that wherever English is spoken or introduced in the "English-speaking world", approximately 90% of the indigenous languages of that region will eventually become extinct at the cost of English (1992: 5). Striking examples are Australia where 90% of the ca. 250 aboriginal languages that are still spoken are nearing extinction (Krauss, 1992: 5), and the United States where of the original 300 native American languages once spoken on U.S. territory only 155 are presently left, of which ca. 88% are nearing extinction (Dalby, 2003: 147). Indeed, the spread of English has been so successful in the last couple of decades that by conservative estimates ca. 700 million people speak it fluently and roughly 1.8 billion people can speak it competently. (Dalby, 2003: 31)

The reasons for language death are quite numerous and include a wide range of circumstances, such as outright genocide, economic and habitat destruction, displacement, slavery, forced assimilation, forced assimilatory education, urbanization,

[293] For an introduction to the rise of English, see Dalby (2003: 179-190).

and deforestation to name just a few.[294] A new, potentially very threatening development for minority languages are the communication technologies of the last decade since they contribute to the dominance of English.[295] Indeed, Jenkins and Williams (2000) point out that:

> Cyberspace is synonymous with English. […] The new information and communication technologies which have reduced the world to a 'Global Village' are underpinned by the English language (Jenkins and Williams, 2000: 26).

In order to assess the level of danger linguists have developed various systems of criteria for language endangerment. Kincade (1991) came up with the following five-level system shown in table 6.5:

[294] For more information, see Krauss (1992: 6-7).
[295] Krauss (1992), for instance, likens this development to a "lethal new weapon" and "cultural nerve gas" (1992: 6).

Table 6.5: Kincade's (1991) Categories of Language Endangerment[296]

1) Viable languages	have population bases that are sufficiently large and thriving to mean that no threat to long-term survival is likely.
2)Viable but small languages	have more than ca. 1,000 speakers, and are spoken in communities that are isolated or with a strong internal organization, and aware of the way their language is a marker of identity.
3) Endangered languages	are spoken by enough people to make survival a possibility, but only in favorable circumstances and with a growth in community support.
4) Nearly extinct languages	Are thought to be beyond the possibility of survival, usually because they are spoken by just a few elderly people.
5) Extinct Languages	Are those where the last fluent speaker has died, and there is no sign of any revival.

The development of Platt, and in particular the students' results from the 2003 survey, show that Platt, too, is in danger of becoming extinct. For instance, by applying Kincade's system Platt qualifies as an endangered language. In fact, if the students' results from the 2003 survey are any indication, then Platt will slip down to level four on Kincade's system to "nearly extinct language" in the course of this century. In this regard, the question of when exactly a language is considered to be endangered is also quite interesting. Estimates for a self-sustaining language, i.e. a speech community that will produce enough young speakers to secure the future of the language, range from 20,000 speakers (Crystal, 2000: 15) to 100,000 speakers (Krauss, 1992:7). By these standards, Platt would be far from being endangered since there are at present well over a

[296] From Crystal (2000: 20).

million Platt speakers in northern Germany. However, both Crystal (2000: 13), and Nettle and Romaine (2000: 9) point out that the concept of safety in numbers is illusionary at best for any minority language. Consider Breton, for instance, a Romance language spoken in the north of France which had well over a million speakers only a generation ago and has now declined to 250,000 speakers (Crystal, 2000: 13). In addition, Crystal (2000: 21-22) points out that not only minority languages are in danger but also some modern European languages that are currently considered viable because they have been losing domains to larger languages. Dutch, for instance, is presently spoken as a first language by seventeen million people in the Netherlands and ca. five million people in Belgium. According to Kincade's (1991) categorization and Krauss' (1992) estimate of at least 100,000 speakers for self-sustainment, this would secure Dutch a place as a viable language. Yet, for the last two decades Dutch has been losing domains to larger languages, mainly English[297], which prompts Van Hoorde to comment:

> Dutch may not be threatened with extinction in the short or medium term, but it is losing domains. It could eventually become just a colloquial language, a language you use at home to speak with your family – the language you can best express your emotions in – but not the one you use for the serious things in life: work, money, science, technology. (Van Hoorde, 1998: 6)

We have seen in chapter two that the reasons for the gradual decline of Platt, with the possible exception of urbanization, are quite different from the usual agents that cause language loss. In other words, Platt and its speakers were never subjugated to such disastrous events as widespread disease, genocide, displacement, slavery, etc.

[297] This development is particularly evident at Dutch universities where a lot of lectures are now given in English.

Researchers, such as Stellmacher (1990), Sanders (1982), and Küpers (1998), all agree that the most common reason for Platt's erosion in modern times ($20^{th}/21^{st}$ century) is to be found in the fact that parents do not pass it on anymore to their children. The results of the 2003 survey and the fact that all but two of the Platt-speaking participants were under eighteen clearly reflect this development. Since this is true for many minority languages, Wurm (1998) developed a different five-level system to assess minority languages which focuses specifically on the speakers' age:

Table 6.6: Wurm's (1998) Five-Level System of Endangered Languages Based on the Age of the Speakers[298]

1) Potentially Endangered Languages	are socially and economically disadvantaged, under heavy pressure from a larger language, and beginning to lose child speakers
2) Endangered Languages	have few or no children learning the language, and the youngest good speakers are young adults
3) Seriously Endangered Languages	have the youngest good speakers at age 50 or older
4) Moribund Languages	have a handful of good speakers left, mostly very old
5) Extinct Languages	have no speakers left

By applying Wurms' system, Platt falls in between category one and category two. Considering the 2003 results of the student-participants one has to draw the conclusion that Platt has almost reached category two. Furthermore, if the erosion of Platt is not halted then it is quite likely that Platt will occupy category three before the end of this century.

[298] From Crystal (2000: 21).

In this section I discussed the scope of the world-wide erosion of minority languages. I have pointed out that, if the situation does not change dramatically, humanity is about to lose several thousand languages within the 21st century. Finally, I have shown that Platt, too, must be regarded as an endangered language, especially in terms of young speakers. The following section examines the consequences of the world-wide trend toward language uniformity.

6.6.2 The Consequences of Language Extinction – Why Should We Care?

It is obvious that language erosion affects the respective speakers the most. Language communities that are facing or experiencing the erosion of their language also experience the gradual loss of their identity and of their history.[299] For instance, Mary Smith, the last speaker of Eyak, a Native American language once widely spoken in Alaska, describes her anguish in the face of the imminent extinction of her native tongue:

> I don't know why it's me, why I'm the one. I tell you, it hurts, it really hurts. (Nettle and Romaine, 2000: 14)

What is less obvious is the fact that language extinction on a large scale affects humankind in general. Indeed, as Crystal (2000: 27) and Nettle and Romaine (2000: ix) point out, most people either do not care about the on-going erosion of the world's minority languages or even welcome this development as a positive event:

[299] For more information on language and identity, see Crystal (2000: 36-40); for information on language and history, see Crystal (2000: 40-44).

> There is a widely held and popular […] belief that any reduction in the number of languages is a benefit for mankind, and not a tragedy at all. (Crystal, 2000: 27)

However, most researchers (Krauss, 1992; Crystal, 2000; Nettle and Romaine, 2000; Dalby, 2003) regard indifference toward language extinction as a grave, even fateful point of view. Crystal (2000), for example, points to the fact that, similar to the need for a healthy and diverse ecosystem, the world is actually dependent on a large pool of diverse language systems:

> The arguments which support the need for biological diversity also apply to language. […] The diversity of living things is apparently directly correlated with stability, and variety may be a necessity in the evolution of natural systems. […] If diversity is a prerequisite for successful humanity, then the preservation of linguistic diversity is essential, for language lies at the heart of what it means to be human. (Crystal, 2000: 32-33)

Nettle and Romaine (2000: ix) support this view and point out that the highest number of language extinctions is found exactly in those regions whose ecosystems have either already collapsed or are in severe danger thereof, e.g. the tropical rainforests of South-East Asia.

While the trend toward language uniformity is clearly unhealthy, Crystal (2000: 41-44) and Nettle and Romaine (2000: 69-77) state that language loss on a grand scale also results in cultural impoverishment. For instance, the erosion or extinction of a language that has produced a body of literature will leave these works inaccessible to future generations.[300] Furthermore, each language represents a repository of specific

[300] Inaccessible here means that people will not be able to read these works without special philological help.

knowledge, and this knowledge, if not recorded or documented, will be lost with the language[301]. Van Hoorde (1998) sums up this development:

> "When you lose your language […] you exclude yourself from the past." (Van Hoorde, 1998: 8)

Unlike the reasons that cause language erosion, its consequences are the same for every language, including Platt. Linguists have been warning for well over a century that, without any major changes, Platt will eventually die out (Stellmacher, 1990). The concern about the survival of Platt has spread to the Grafschaft Bentheim, and has prompted several local authors (Hilckmann 1961, 1965; Elfers, 1993; Küpers, 1998) to warn the community about the consequences of a further erosion of Platt. Their predictions on a local level mirror the ones of Crystal (2000), Nettle and Romaine (2000), and Daley (2003), who outlined the global consequences of language loss. For example, Elfers (1993) points out that the loss of Platt in the Grafschaft will result in the vanishing of specific Grafschafter customs and traditions:

> Mit dem Rückzug von Platt [werden] ebenfalls alte Grafschafter Sitten und Gebräuche verloren gehen.[302] (Elfers, 1993: 266)

Hilckmann (1961) warns about the cultural impoverishment that a possible extinction of Platt in the Grafschaft will bring with it:

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[301] This is, for instance, presently a problem in Australia. It is believed that the remaining aboriginal languages on this continent possess valuable information about the original settlement history of Australia. This information, however, has been passed down in the form of oral histories for centuries and never been written down. The extinction of these remaining aboriginal languages would most certainly result in a loss of knowledge. For more information, see Nettle and Romaine (2000: 70-71).

[302] "Old Grafschafter customs and traditions will be lost with the retreat of Platt." – my translation.

> Das Sterben eines Dialektes bedeutet immer einen geistigen Verlust, eine Verarmung.[303] (Hilckmann, 1961: 837)

Hilckmann (1965) also points out that the entire heritage of the Grafschaft Bentheim historically has always been linked to Platt rather than to Standard German (1965: 202). Any further erosion of Platt in the Grafschaft would ultimately have as a consequence that the cultural and intellectual heritage of this region will be wiped out. Finally, Hilckmann (1965) warns that the community's identity will be irrevocably damaged if Platt should become extinct in the Grafschaft Bentheim:

> Etwas unendlich Wertvolles droht durch unsere eigene Schuld unterzugehen, weil wir seinen Wert nicht erkennen; etwas, ohne das wir nicht mehr wären was wir sind[304] (Hilckmann, 1965: 202).

In this section I outlined the consequences that language loss on a large scale will have for humanity. I showed that the possible extinction of Platt would affect the region and its speakers the same way as other minority languages, i.e. a loss of distinctly local traditions, and an irrevocable damage to the Grafschaft's cultural and intellectual identity.

Faced with deforestation, pollution, and global warming, the world has reacted by initiating international treaties and numerous programs to preserve the world's resources, such as the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, and numerous private organizations, e.g. the Sierra Club. In addition, almost all of the world's two hundred independent countries have ministries or

[303] "The dying of a dialect always means an intellectual loss, an impoverishment." – my translation.
[304] "Something infinitely precious is on the verge of vanishing through our own fault because we do not recognize its value; something without which we would not be what we are." – my translation.

departments charged with the protection and preservation of the environment. Many researchers, e.g. Krauss (1992) and Nettle and Romaine (2000), have commented on the striking numerical imbalance that exists between organizations dedicated to preserve the world's nature and organizations dedicated to preserve the world's languages. In fact, Nettle and Romaine (2000: ix) point out that people seem to care more about the plight of the panda bear or the number of spotted owls than about dying languages. In Europe, the European Union has been trying to acknowledge and promote minority languages by creating the "European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages" in 1992. As mentioned in chapter two, Platt has been a member of this charter since 1995. The last section of this chapter then examines whether the official recognition of Platt as a minority language can contribute anything to reverse its on-going erosion.

6.7 Platt as an Officially Recognized Minority Language in Europe

The example of the Welsh language (see section 5.4.2**)** has shown that grassroots movements and citizens' initiatives can be highly effective for the revitalization of a language. The question which I examine in this section is whether a "top-down approach" can be equally effective in terms of revitalizing an endangered language[305]. On January 1st, 1999 Platt along with five other minority languages in Germany, namely Sater Frisian[306], North Frisian[307], Sorbian[308], Danish[309], and Romani[310], was conferred

[305] For an introduction into language planning and language revitalization, see Fishman (1991).
[306] Sater Frisian is the last remnant of the East Frisian Language and is currently spoken by about 2,500 people in isolated pockets in the northern coastal region of Germany.

upon the status of a minority language in Europe. This was ratified by an overwhelming majority in the *Deutscher Bundestag* (German Parliament). The ratification brought with it an entire catalogue of recommended measures to protect these languages[311]. Among them are:

- sufficient allocation of means and facilities to teach minority languages
- state support to research theses languages
- equal treatment of Platt, Sorbian, etc. in all matters, including law and administration
- state officials must undergo schooling in these languages if they are to work in an area where a minority language is spoken
- the media have to provide appropriate outlets, such as broadcasting in a minority language
- promotion of cultural activities that are either conducted in a particular minority language or include information about minority languages
- Official documents, e.g. from administrations, have to be bilingual

While it might be too early yet to assess if these recommendations have borne any tangible fruit, it should be noted that similar attempts by European governments have proved to be largely unsuccessful. The Irish language is a good example in this respect[312]. British occupation policies and economic depravation have had devastating consequences for Irish. Once the main language of Ireland, its numbers decreased to ca.

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[307] North Frisian is spoken by about 10,000 people in the north of Schleswig-Holstein on the border to Denmark.
[308] Sorbian, also known as Wendish, is a West Slavic language spoken by about 80,000 people in the extreme south-east of Germany on the borders of the Czech Republic and Poland.
[309] Danish is spoken by a Danish minority of about 25,000 people in the state of Schleswig-Holstein.
[310] Romani, an Indo-Iranian language, is the language of the Sinti and Roma ("Gypsies") and currently spoken, according to the latest edition of the Ethnologue (2005), by about 7,000 speakers in Germany.
[311] For a description of the entire catalogue, see Küpers (1998).
[312] Irish is a member of the Celtic language group.

four million speakers in 1835 and had dwindled down to about 680,000 in 1895. With the achievement of (relative) autonomy and the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the new government took immediate action to support and revitalize Irish. This was most evident in the fact that article eight of the Irish constitution made Irish the first official language of Ireland and English the second one. Other measures to promote Irish included that all civil service workers (including postal workers, tax officials, and agricultural inspectors) had to have at least some proficiency in the language. This requirement, however, was dropped in 1974. Study of Irish as a subject has become mandatory and remains so to this day in every school in the Republic that receives public money. One would think that such measures would contribute to the revitalization of a language. However, the latest figures (2000) published on the number of Irish speakers show that while ca. one million people possess to have some knowledge of Irish (Dalby, 2003: 111), the actual number of people who use it on a daily basis is now well beyond 100,000.[313] Dalby (2003) sums up the failure of the top-down approach to reinstate Irish:

> Overall the results have fallen far short of those that were at first intended. Policy-makers originally hoped that by the 1930s, or the 1940s at the latest, the majority of all education in Ireland would be conducted in Irish. That never happened. They hoped that the proportion of native Irish speakers in the population would increase; it declined from perhaps 15 percent in 1922 to an estimated 3 percent in 1981. (Dalby, 2003: 112)

[313] The statistics for the number of active Irish speakers vary greatly, from 80,000 to as low as 20,000. For more information, see Dalby (2003: 110-112).

The Irish example does not bode well for similar top-down approaches. With regards to Platt, it should also be pointed out that – in the face of empty treasuries and high unemployment in Germany - many of the proposed measures by the EU, such as official documents in both Platt and Standard German or promotion of Platt in schools, have yet to be installed. The latter measure, promotion of Platt in schools, is of particular interest. The results of the Platt speakers and Non-Platt speakers from the 2003 survey have clearly shown that the majority of the Grafschafter population is in favor of having Platt in schools (see section 5.6.3). However, the current statues of the Ministry of Education in Lower Saxony do not permit the study of Platt as a subject per se; rather it recommends to "integrate“ Low German into the syllabus in conjunction with other subjects, such as German or History. Many informants of my 2003 survey reported that such an approach does not go far enough and, in effect, does very little to promote active speaking of Platt. This situation is further hampered by the fact that many teachers in the Grafschaft have little to no knowledge of Platt.[314] The faculty of one elementary school in the Grafschaft took matters in their own hands and has made the study of the Low German language a mandatory subject for all fourth graders.[315] I had the privilege to visit one of the *Plattstunden* ("Platt lessons“) during my research and found the students in this class to be quite enthusiastic. Their teacher, Mrs. Q., told me later that part of this enthusiasm stems from the fact that her students find it exciting to apply their new

[314] A lack of manpower, i.e. teachers who could teach Platt, is often cited as the main problem with regards to the promotion of Platt in schools.
[315] It should be noted here that the school in question, maybe in an attempt to lessen its “defiance”, does not give grades in this subject. Moreover, Platt is offered only once a week for all fourth graders.

knowledge in conversations with their Platt-speaking grandparents. However, Mrs. Q. also stated that promotion in school will not result in a revitalization of Platt:

> Über die Schulen und schulischen Unterricht wird sich die plattdeutsche Sprache nicht erhalten, sondern höchstens der Gebrauch der plattdeutschen Sprache fördern und unterstützen lassen.[316]
> (Informant Q., Wilsum, April 22, 2003)

This statement is echoed by many researchers who have been claiming for a long time now that the acquisition of Platt has to take place at home and that schools are no substitute for this process (Stellmacher, 1990; Sanders, 1982). Küpers (1997) stresses the fact that any top-down approach to revitalize Platt is doomed to be unsuccessful if it meets with indifference or unwillingness in the community:

> Das grundlegende Problem scheint mir jedoch woanders zu liegen. Man kann Gesundheit nicht befehlen, nicht anordnen. Gesundheit muss von innen kommen, muss gewollt sein, der Patient muss etwas tun, muss gesund werden wollen. Allerdings kann und muss Anleitung von außen gegeben werden.[317] (Küpers, 1998: 321)

Informant R., an administrative worker in Nordhorn, agrees and points out:

> Die Grafschafter müssen selbst überzeugt sein, dass ihre Sprache es wert ist, weiter vermittelt zu werden.[318]
> (Informant R., Nordhorn, March 5, 2003)

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[316] "Schools and lessons in schools will not contribute to the preservation of Platt. They can, at the most, promote and support the use of the Low German language." – my translation.
[317] "The essential problem seems to lie somewhere else in my opinion. One cannot prescribe health. Health has to come from the inside, must be wanted, the patient has to do something, he has to want to become healthy. However, instructions from outside can and should be given." – my translation.
[318] "The Grafschafter themselves have to be convinced that their language is worthwhile of passing on." – my translation.

The skepticism about the success of the EU measures, even if they should be installed, is shared by Menge (1997), who comments on the planned attempt to make Platt an official language in the future alongside with High German. According to Menge (1997), the retraction of Platt into private domains will make its reinstatement as an official language very difficult:

> Es müsste schon ein gigantischer linguistischer Aufwand getrieben werden, wenn das Niederdeutsche zu einer Sprache der Öffentlichkeit werden soll.[319] (Menge, 1997: 40)

This problem is even more compounded by the fact there is no common orthography for Platt, and that nowadays not two communities speak an identical version of Platt. Moreover, Menge (1997) believes that Low German's loss of domains has led to a situation in which the use of Platt as an official language has become unfeasible and impossible. Any attempt to do so would only result in "Hochdeutsches in niederdeutschem Gewande" ("High German in a Low German garb", Menge, 1997-40, my translation). Finally, Menge (1997) questions the goal of the EU measures altogether by pointing out that the existing status quo of Standard German as the only official language in Germany cannot be altered anymore:

> Wo würde der Sinn eines solchen Ausbaus [Platt als öffentliche Sprache] liegen, wo doch alle Möglichkeiten auf Hochdeutsch schon bereitstehen?[320] (Menge, 1997: 40)

[319] "There would have to be a gigantic linguistic attempt if Low German were to become an official language." – my translation.
[320] "What would be the sense of such an expansion [Low German as an official language] if one can say everything in High German?" – my translation.

The skepticism of both researchers and informants of my 2003 survey with regards to the feasibility of the EU measures demonstrate the difficulty of top-down approaches in language revitalization. The fact that there is still no implementation of the EU measures seven years after their ratification but instead only indifference and confusion makes it increasingly doubtful whether these measures will ever achieve their intended goals in the Grafschaft. What is really needed in order to revitalize Platt and to stop it from complete extinction are not more rules and proposals by lawmakers from Brussels but grassroots movement by the Grafschafter citizens. The ratification of the EU measures means official approval and support for almost any action to revitalize Platt in the Grafschaft. It is now up to the Grafschafter themselves to take steps in this direction. However, if the student results of my 2003 survey and the overall indifference toward a revitalization of Platt are any indication, then one has to conclude that it is too late now to stop Platt from further erosion and that by the end of this century it will either have become extinct in the Grafschaft or only be spoken by a handful of speakers in the *Niedergrafschaft*.

6.8 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the future of diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim by examining the results of the student-participants in the 2003 survey. I showed in section 6.5 that both their active and passive competence of Platt is somewhat higher than those of their peers in Oldenburg (1985) and the Emsland (1990). I pointed out that the reason for the overall higher results in the Grafschaft are to be found in the relatively strong Low

German competence of the *Niedergrafschafter* students, and that the results for the *Obergrafschaft* by itself are very similar to those of previous surveys. I also showed that the students' appreciation of Platt is universally much lower than it has been in previous years (cf. Kruse's 1992 study in Emden). In section 6.6 I discussed the decline of Platt in the context of the world-wide erosion of minority languages. By applying various systems (Kincade, 1991; Wurm, 1998) of measuring language endangerment I came to the conclusion that Platt, especially in light of the students' results from the 2003 survey, must be considered an endangered language. This becomes especially evident when taking into account the present number of young speakers, i.e. the number of young adults from the 2003 survey who profess to have a good active and passive knowledge of Platt. In section 6.7 I discussed whether the European Union's recognition of Platt as an official minority language and the EU's proposed package of measures can reverse the erosion of Platt. I showed that any serious expectations for a revitalization of Platt through official measures must be reassessed considering that similar measures failed to make any significant impact in other European countries and the fact that so far not one single measure to protect Platt has been implemented in the Grafschaft. I concluded by pointing out that the only feasible way to halt Platt's erosion and to possibly revitalize it is through community efforts and grassroots movements in the Grafschaft Bentheim.

We now turn to the last chapter in which I give a conclusion about the findings from my 2003 survey.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 The Functions of Platt

The results of my 2003 survey confirm that Ferguson's category "conversations with friends, family and colleagues" belongs firmly into the L-domain in the Grafschaft Bentheim. Within Low German research, these findings are quite remarkable because previous surveys, such as the 1984 GETAS study, have shown that this category is, at the most, shared by Platt and High German. My results have also shown that usage of the L-variety for Ferguson's sub-category "conversations with colleagues" is not restricted to blue-collar workers in the Grafschaft but rather that Platt enjoys a wide usage among white-collar workers as well. In fact, Platt successfully functions as a means of communication at the modern-day workplace. Furthermore, this sub-category is extended in the Grafschaft Bentheim to some fairly sophisticated settings, such as political meetings or banking business. Within diglossic studies, these findings refute the commonly held assumption that the L-variety is not capable of fulfilling sophisticated functions in a professional environment. Indeed, my results show that the L-variety is an effective tool and a proper medium for engaging in higher-level discourse.

7.2 The Language Attitudes of Non-Platt Speakers

My results have demonstrated that H-speakers do not view their language variety as superior to L or as more prestigious. In fact, the language attitudes in the Grafschaft Bentheim are a reversal of diglossic theory which commonly holds that H-speakers frown

on the L-variety, or even despise it. My results show that most H-speakers rate the L-variety as equally sophisticated as the H-variety, and also that almost all of them have developed an emotional attachment to the L-variety. Their positive attitudes toward Platt expressed themselves in several ways, chiefly by associating L with the idea of *Heimat*, and also by incorporating certain L-words into their lexicon. My results also showed that most H-speakers wish for their children to learn the L-variety. This proves that the H-speakers in the Grafschaft Bentheim do not regard Platt as an obstacle to their children's acquisition of H or as a general hindrance in their children's education. In addition, this shows that H-speakers in the Grafschaft Bentheim see the L-variety as a language worthy to be continued by their children. The 2003 results from the Grafschaft raise the question whether L-varieties in diglossic speech communities are really so universally looked down on by H-speakers and call for a reevaluation of the image and prestige of L-varieties in diglossia.

7.3 Diglossia in the Grafschaft Bentheim – How much longer?

The data from my student-participants confirm the trend toward the H-variety among young adults. Although my results showed that Platt is not (yet) in danger in smaller rural communities, the overall competence of Platt and its evaluational status among young adults is alarmingly low and indicative of the rapid erosion Platt has been experiencing in the last couple of decades. I also showed that it is difficult to protect or revitalize L-varieties through official schemes, such as the EU measures. However, the looming danger of the extinction of Platt in the Grafschaft may still be averted if the

present indifference is overcome by a real desire to prevent any further erosion (e.g. grassroots movements). Finally, I pointed out what we will lose if Platt should indeed become extinct in the Grafschaft: not only an L-variety of a diglossic speech community but a way of life and a distinct identity – a fate that will hopefully never come to pass.

7.4 Suggestions for further Research

I have shown in section 4.6.1 that the majority of my Platt speaking participants made a conscious effort to raise their children in High German and that they attributed this decision to the general zeitgeist of the 1960s and 1970s. The sentence "It was fashionable in the sixties to speak only High German with children" was of such consistent nature during the oral interviews that it is hard to underestimate the impact of the parents' language choice with their children on the present situation of Platt. More research is needed here to establish a concrete correlation between the social/cultural climate in West-Germany during the 1960s and 1970s and the diminishing numbers of young Platt speakers in the 1990s and the new millenium (see also footnote 190).

Finally, in order to gather real-time linguistic changes and developments, this study in its present format should be repeated in the same location in twenty years from now.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PLATT SPEAKERS (TRANSLATION)
(Numbers in parentheses indicate the quantity of answers)
88 Informants

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Occupation: _____

Place of birth:_____

Residence: _____

Denomination: _____

1) With whom do you usually speak Platt?

	never	seldom	Sometimes	often	always
Neighbors (88x)	11%	2%	11%	37%	39%
Friends (88x)	6%	10%	21%	47%	16%
Colleagues (75x)	17%	12%	30%	28%	13%
Children (85x)	36%	29%	24%	4%	7%
Parents (83x)	11%	6%	8%	2%	73%
Grandparents (68x)	12%	0%	4%	11%	73%
Spouse (80x)	24%	17%	11%	4%	48%
Siblings (83x)	16%	6%	6%	4%	44%

2) With whom do you usually speak High German?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
Neighbors (83x)	25%	29%	18%	16%	12%
Friends (84x)	11%	21%	26%	29%	13%
Colleagues ((68x)	9%	35%	22%	19%	15%
Children (82x)	5%	4%	7%	24%	60%
Parents (83x)	72%	2%	4%	4%	18%
Grandparents (68x)	72%	7%	6%	3%	12%
Spouse (78x)	41%	5%	5%	15%	33%
Siblings (83x)	63%	5%	4%	5%	23%

3) In which situations do you usually speak Platt?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
At work (75x)	13%	15%	27%	33%	12%
In stores (88x)	7%	22%	45%	26%	0%
At home (88x)	12%	12%	18%	26%	32%
At parties (88x)	7%	9%	34%	43%	7%
Visits with friends (88x)	4%	4%	37%	49%	6%

4) In which situations do you usually speak High German?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
At work (74x)	8%	13%	17%	36%	26%
In stores (88x)	0%	9%	30%	45%	16%
At home (83x)	24%	16%	10%	26%	24%
At parties (88x)	4%	14%	40%	33%	9%
Visits with friends (88x)	2%	18%	45%	28%	7%

5) I speak….

	fluently	well	somewhat	a little	not at all
Platt (88x)	76%	19%	3%	2%	0%
Dutch (88x)	3%	14%	24%	38%	21%
German (88x)	80%	17%	3%	0%	0%

6) I understand…

	very well	well	somewhat	a little	not at all
Platt (88x)	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Dutch (86x)	8%	37%	31%	23%	1%
German (88x)	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%

7) Do you read books or articles in Platt? (88x)

a) often (21%)
a) sometimes (51%)
b) seldom (19%)
c) never (9%)

7) Do you attend Low German theater shows? (88x)

a) often (16%)
b) sometimes (44%)
c) seldom (32%)
d) never (8%)

8) Do you listen to Dutch radio shows or watch Dutch television? (88x)

a) often (11%)
b) sometimes (22%)
c) seldom (43%)
d) never (24%)

9) More efforts should be made to promote Platt in schools.(80x)

a) agree strongly (41%)
b) agree (54%)
c) don't know (1%)
d) disagree (3%)
e) disagree strongly (1%)

10) I would enroll my child if Platt were offered as a subject in school.(83x)

a) yes (92%)
b) maybe (7%)
c) no (1%)

11) I would sign up if the local *Volkshochschule* offered a Low German course. (88x)

a) yes (9%)
b) maybe (28%)
c) no (63%)

11) I would support a measure to make Platt once a week the language of instruction in schools. (87x))

a) yes (53%)
b) maybe (31%)
c) no (16%)

12) Which statement does apply if your answer for question 13 was "no"? (17x)

a) it would confuse the children (12%)
b) the language of instruction should be German only in principle (82%)
c) the children would not learn decent German (6%)
d) it would lower the chances for a job (0%)

13) Please indicate to which degree you associate the following terms with Platt.

	very much	much	somewhat	a little	not at all
Heimat (home) (87x)	84%	15%	1%	0%	0%
official (63x)	2%	10%	15%	25%	48%
familiar (82x)	62%	33%	2%	1%	1%
friendly (77x)	44%	44%	5%	7%	0%
Past (80x)	60%	25%	6%	3%	6%
strange (72x)	0%	6%	2%	6%	86%
religion (70x)	7%	12%	14%	20%	47%
arrogant (71x)	0%	0%	3%	6%	91%
rural (81x)	49%	30%	17%	3%	1%
future (67x)	3%	21%	36%	24%	16%
identity (77x)	51%	31%	14%	1%	3%
City (70x)	0%	1%	19%	29%	51%

16) Do you greet people in Platt? (87x)

a) often (61%)
b) sometimes (32%)
c) seldom (5%)
d) never (2%)

17) Do you say farewell in Platt? (87x)

a) often (60%)
b) sometimes (29%)
c) seldom (8%)
d) never (3%)

18) Please write down which greeting or farewell you usually use in Platt.

Most common greetings: 1) dag 2) wo est mit di?

Most common farewells: 1) het beste, 2) good goan 3) holl di dapper

19) Do you speak Platt in your church community? (84x)

a) often (33%)
b) sometimes (13%)
c) seldom (23%)
d) never (21%)

20) Do you speak Platt at weddings, funerals, or other church events? (88x)

a) often (51%)
b) sometimes (40%)
c) seldom (6%)
d) never (3%)

21) Does the pastor or priest in your church speak Platt? (82x)

a) yes (23%)
b) a little (16%)
c) he/she understands it (24%)
d) no (37%)

21) Is the service/mass in your church held in other languages than High German? (66x)

a) no other language (55%)
b) Platt (30%)
c) Dutch (12%)
d) English (1.5%)
e) French (1.5%)

22) Which language do you use in conversations with people from the Netherlands? (several answers were possible, 110x)

a) Platt (56%)
b) Dutch (29%)
c) High German (15%)

23) Do you feel insecure in situations where only High German is spoken? (88x)

a) always (0%)
b) often (0%)
c) sometimes (5%)
d) seldom (16%)
e) never (81%)

24) Is there anything that annoys you in general when people speak High German? Can you describe it?

25) Do you think that people who moved here should learn how to speak Platt? (86x)

a) yes (40%)
b) maybe (48%)
c) no (12%)

26) Do you think that people who moved here are able to learn speaking Platt like native Platt speakers? (88x)

a) yes (30%)
b) maybe (42%)
c) no (28%)

27) I can express my thoughts and feelings better in Platt. (84x)

a) agree strongly (17%)
b) agree (27%)
c) don't know (14%)
d) disagree (35%)
e) disagree strongly (7%)

28) I get nervous when I speak Platt in public.(88x)

a) always true (1%)
b) true (3%)
c) sometimes true (11%)
d) not true (33%)
e) not true at all (52%)

29) I can express my thoughts and feelings better in High German.(88x)

a) agree strongly (10%)
b) agree (26%)
c) don't know (15%)
d) disagree (35%)
e) disagree strongly (14%)

30) Twents, the Dutch variety of Platt on the other side of the border, is for me…(88x)

a) a different language (1%)
b) a language that is closely related to Platt (70%)
c) basically the same language as Platt (18%)
d) a language that shares a few similarities with Platt (8%)
e) don't know (3%)

31) I feel relaxed when I meet someone that I can talk Platt with. (85x)

a) agree strongly (27%)
b) agree (39%)
c) don't know (9%)
d) disagree (21%)
e) disagree strongly (4%)

32) I find the growing influence of English on the German language…(88x)

a) damaging (12%)
b) annoying (59%)
c) don't know (21%)
d) positive (8%)
e) very good (0%)

33) The growing influence of English is negative for the future of Platt.(87x)

a) agree strongly (10%)
b) agree (20%)
c) don't know (32%)
d) disagree (33%)
e) disagree strongly (5%)

34) The growing influence of English is negative for the future of German. (88x)

a) agree strongly (13%)
b) agree (36%)
c) don't know (25%)
d) disagree (24%)
e) disagree strongly (2%)

35) Are you sometimes afraid to speak Platt? (88x)

a) often (3%)
b) sometimes (7%)
c) seldom (25%)
d) never (65%)

36) Which statement is true if your answer for question 36 was "sometimes" or "often"? (7x)

a) People will not take me seriously (14%)
b) I get laughed at when I use Platt (14%)
c) I cannot express myself well in Platt (72%)

37) What do you think, how are Platt and German valued in your community?

Platt (88x):	very high (16%)	high (41%)	neutral (39%)	low (4%)	very low (0%)
German (86x)	:very high (14%)	high (47%)	neutral (37%)	low (2%)	very low (0%)

38) Do you speak Platt in "mixed society", i.e. in situations where some people know Platt and other people do not know Platt? (87x)

a) always (5%)
b) often (46%)
c) seldom (13%)
d) sometimes (31%)
e) never (5%)

39) Do you think that Platt will still be spoken in fifty years from now? (88x)

a) very likely (15%)
b) likely (44%)
c) don't know (10%)
d) rather unlikely (24%)
e) highly unlikely (7%)

40) Do you think that Platt will still be spoken in a hundred years from now? (88x)

a) very likely (8%)
b) likely (23%)
c) don't know (27%)
d) rather unlikely ((23%)
e) highly unlikely (19%)

40) Why do you think is Platt being spoken less and less? (88x)

a) Platt is not old fashioned/not contemporary anymore (9%)
b) the Low German language is not being passed on anymore (78%)
c) Platt is an obstacle in the professional world (3%)
d) Platt speakers have a more difficult time in school (10%)

43) Please indicate to which degree you associate the following terms with High German.

	very much	much	somewhat	a little	not at all
Heimat (home) (74x)	18%	32%	19%	20%	11%
official (75x)	48%	40%	8%	3%	1%
familiar (73x)	16%	44%	25%	12%	3%
friendly (71x)	13%	46%	29%	8%	4%
Past (67x)	9%	22%	24%	18%	27%
strange (69x)	0%	16%	14%	6%	64%
religion (69x)	16%	38%	14%	7%	25%
arrogant (65x)	6%	10%	18%	18%	48%
Rural (65x)	5%	5%	9%	21%	60%
future (73x)	32%	37%	13%	11%	7%
identity (66x)	23%	38%	30%	3%	6%
City (79x)	40%	53%	1%	3%	3%

44) Which statement would apply to you personally the most? (88x)

a) Platt is a very important or important part of my identity as a Grafschafter (53%)
b) Platt is part of my identity as a Grafschafter (44%)
c) Platt is unimportant for identity as a Grafschafter (3%)

45) I am proud to be a Platt speaker. (74x)

a) agree strongly (53%)
b) agree (41%)
c) don't know (4%)
d) disagree (2%)
e) disagree strongly (0%)

46) Which statement would apply to you personally the most? (88x)

a) German is a very important or important part of my identity as a Grafschafter (13%)
b) German is part of my identity as a Grafschafter (54%)
c) German is unimportant for identity as a Grafschafter (33%)

47) I am proud to be a German speaker. (79x)

a) agree strongly (9%)
b) agree (44%)
c) don't know (17%)
d) disagree (27%)
e) disagree strongly (3%)

48) A world without Platt would be….

	agree strongly	agree	don't know	disagree	disagree strongly
sad (81x)	40%	44%	9%	6%	1%
possible (76x)	0%	33%	22%	32%	13%
richer (76x)	3%	1%	5%	21%	70%
more progressive (75x)	0%	3%	5%	27%	65%
unimaginable (77x)	22%	30%	20%	20%	8%
poorer (85x)	57%	31%	1%	6%	5%
more backward(79x)	5%	18%	24%	16%	37%
positive (76x)	1%	0%	0%	18%	81%
more practical (74x)	0%	1%	3%	43%	53%
lonelier (80x)	32%	43%	10%	6%	9%

49) It sounds beautiful when people mix Platt and German. (78x)

a) agree strongly (6%)
b) agree (17%)
c) don't know (40%)
d) disagree (27%)
e) disagree strongly (10%)

50) It annoys me when people mix Platt and German. (88x)

a) agree strongly (20%)
b) agree (33%)
c) don't know (20%)
d) disagree (16%)
e) disagree strongly (11%)

51) I think that the mixing of Platt and German will lead to the decline of Platt. (86x)

a) agree strongly (21%)
b) agree (35%)
c) don't know (21%)
d) disagree (16%)
e) disagree strongly (12%)

52) I think that the mixing of Platt and German will help preserve the Low German language. (86x)

a) agree strongly (3%)
b) agree (19%)
c) don't know (24%)
d) disagree (20%)
e) disagree strongly (34%)

53) The mixing of Platt and German is good for the general dialogue in the Grafschaft Bentheim.
(88x)

a) agree strongly (9%)
b) agree (21%)
c) don't know (24%)
d) disagree (27%)
e) disagree strongly (19%)

54) I personally mix Platt and German because… (several answers were possible, 113x)

a) I do not know a certain word in Platt or in German (26%)
b) I can express myself better by doing so (10%)
c) certain words have no real equivalent in Platt or German (41%)
d) I am just able to do it (15%)
e) to emphasize my words (8%)

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-PLATT SPEAKERS (TRANSLATION)
(Numbers in parentheses indicate the quantity of answers)
35 Informants

Name: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Occupation: _____

Place of birth:_____

Residence: _____

1) Where do you hear Platt?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
Neighbors (33x)	24%	15%	30%	28%	3%
Friends (33x)	19%	42%	36%	3%	0%
Colleagues (29x)	38%	38%	17%	7%	0%
Children (29x)	76%	24%	0%	0%	0%
Parents (29x)	38%	3%	24%	21%	14%
Grandparents (21x)	48%	5%	14%	28%	5%
Spouse (26x)	77%	15%	4%	4%	0%
Siblings (29x)	76%	14%	7%	0%	3%

2) With whom do you usually speak High German?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
Neighbors (33x)	3%	0%	0%	9%	88%
Friends (33x)	0%	0%	6%	6%	88%
Colleagues (30x)	0%	0%	3%	3%	94%
Children (28x)	0%	0%	0%	4%	96%
Parents (28x)	0%	0%	7%	7%	86%
Grandparents (22x)	0%	5%	9%	5%	81%
Spouse (28x)	0%	0%	0%	4%	96%
Siblings (31x)	3%	0%	0%	3%	94%

3) In which situations do you usually hear Platt?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
At work (26x)	27%	38%	27%	8%	0%
In stores (35x)	20%	17%	43%	20%	0%
At home (32x)	44%	25%	22%	9%	0%
At parties (33x)	12%	42%	33%	12%	0%
Visits with friends (32x)	9%	22%	50%	19%	0%

4) In which situations do you usually speak High German?

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
At work (29x)	3%	0%	7%	7%	83%
In stores (33x)	6%	0%	3%	6%	85%
At home (34x)	3%	0%	0%	6%	91%
At parties (33x)	0%	3%	3%	12%	82%
Visits with friends (33x)	3%	3%	3%	9%	82%

5) I speak….

	fluently	well	somewhat	a little	not at all
Platt (31x)	0%	2%	28%	35%	35%
Dutch (34x)	0%	3%	0%	38%	49%
German (35x)	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%

6) I understand…

	very well	well	somewhat	a little	not at all
Platt (33x)	15%	50%	21%	15%	0%
Dutch (32x)	3%	9%	38%	47%	3%
German (35x)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

7) Do you read books or articles in Platt? (35x)

a) often (6%)
b) sometimes (20%)
c) seldom (31%)
d) never (43%)

8) Do you attend Low German theater shows? (35x)

a) often (0%)
b) sometimes (20%)
c) seldom (26%)
d) never (54%)

9) Do you listen to Dutch radio shows or watch Dutch television? (35x)

a) often (0%)
b) sometimes (14%)
c) seldom (40%)
d) never (46%)

10) More efforts should be made to promote Platt in schools.(34x)

a) agree strongly (9%)
b) agree (74%)
c) don't know (11%)
d) disagree (6%)
e) disagree strongly (0%)

11) I would enroll my child if Platt were offered as a subject in school.(34x)

a) yes (59%)
b) maybe (38%)
c) no (3%)

12) I would sign up if the local *Volkshochschule* offered a Low German course. (35x)

a) yes (3%)
b) maybe (37%)
c) no (60%)

13) I would support a measure to make Platt once a week the language of instruction in schools. (35x)

a) yes (23%)
b) maybe (34%)
c) no (43%)

14) Which statement does apply if your answer for question 13 was "no"? (13x)

a) it would confuse the children (38%)
b) the language of instruction should be German only in principle (46%)
c) the children would not learn decent German (16%)
d) it would lower the chances for a job (0%)

15) Please indicate to which degree you associate the following terms with Platt.

	very much	much	somewhat	a little	not at all
Heimat (home) (32x)	50%	31%	10%	6%	3%
official (24x)	0%	4%	8%	17%	71%
familiar (30x)	13%	69%	27%	28%	3%
friendly (28x)	11%	43%	39%	0%	7%
Past (29x)	34%	42%	14%	3%	7%
strange (24x)	0%	0%	13%	21%	66%
religion (24x)	4%	0%	21%	13%	62%
arrogant (23x)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
rural (31x)	45%	43%	6%	0%	6%
future (25x)	0%	4%	36%	36%	24%
identity (26x)	12%	27%	31%	15%	15%
City (26x)	0%	0%	0%	4%	96%

16) Do you greet people in Platt? (34x)

a) often (9%)
b) sometimes (38%)
c) seldom (11%)
d) never (42%)

17) Do you say farewell in Platt? (35x)

a) often (6%)
b) sometimes (33%)
c) seldom (12%)
d) never (49%)

18) Please write down which greeting or farewell you usually use in Platt.

Most common greetings: 1) dag

Most common farewells: 1) beste

19) Is Platt spoken in your church community? (32x)

a) often (22%)
b) sometimes (25%)
c) seldom (13%)
d) never (40%)

20) Do you hear Platt at weddings, funerals, or other church events? (33x)

a) often (27%)
b) sometimes (24%)
c) seldom (18%)
d) never (31%)

21) Does the pastor or priest in your church speak Platt? (29x)

a) yes (14%)
b) a little (7%)
c) he/she understands it (21%)
d) no (58%)

22) Is the service/mass in your church held in other languages than High German? (7x)

a) Platt (43%)
b) Polish (14%)
c) Portuguese (43%)

23) Which language do you use in conversations with people from the Netherlands? (several answers were possible, 43x)

a) Platt (21%)
b) Dutch (16%)
c) High German (63%)

24) Do you feel insecure in situations where Platt only is spoken? (35x)

a) always (8%)
b) often (8%)
c) sometimes (34%)
d) seldom (28%)
e) never (22%)

25) Is there something in general that annoys you when people speak Platt?

26) Do you think that people who moved here should learn how to speak Platt? (33x)

a) yes (6%)
b) maybe (64%)
c) no (30%)

27) Do you think that people who moved here are able to learn speaking Platt like native Platt speakers? (34x)

a) yes (3%)
b) maybe (35%)
c) no (62%)

28) I do not like when people speak Platt because I do not understand everything. (34x)

a) agree strongly (6%)
b) agree (15%)
c) don't know (0%)
d) disagree (38%)
e) disagree strongly (41%)

29) When I hear Platt…(33x)

a) I am always amazed that there are still Platt speakers (12%)
b) I get annoyed because I do not like the language (0%)
c) I feel more at home (64%)
d) I do not feel more at home (24%)

30) What do you do if someone talks to you in Platt? (35x)

a) I answer in High German (54%)
b) I try to answer in Platt if it someone I know (40%)
c) I do not say anything because I do not understand Platt (0%)
d) I ask the person to change into High German (6%)

31) Platt is not as expressive as German. (34x)

a) agree strongly (()%)
b) agree (12%)
c) don't know (35%)
d) disagree (35%)
e) disagree strongly (18%)

32) I can express my thoughts and feelings better in German. (34x)

a) agree strongly (56%)
b) agree (32%)
c) don't know (6%)
d) disagree (3%)
e) disagree strongly (3%)

33) I feel like an outsider when people speak Platt. (34x)

a) agree strongly (0%)
b) agree (24%)
c) don't know (6%)
d) disagree (38%)
e) disagree strongly (32%)

34) Twents, the Dutch variety of Platt on the other side of the border, is for me…(35x)

a) a different language (14%)
b) a language that is closely related to Platt (50%)
c) basically the same language as Platt (6%)
d) a language that shares a few similarities with Platt (14%)
e) don't know (6%)

35) I find the growing influence of English on the German language…(32x)

a) damaging (3%)
b) annoying (56%)
c) don't know (38%)
d) positive (3%)
e) very good (0%)

36) The growing influence of English is negative for the future of Platt.(35x)

a) agree strongly (6%)
b) agree (25%)
c) don't know (41%)
d) disagree (22%)
e) disagree strongly (6%)

37) The growing influence of English is negative for the future of German. (33x)

a) agree strongly (10%)
b) agree (30%)
c) don't know (27%)
d) disagree (30%)
e) disagree strongly (3%)

38) What do you think, how are Platt and German valued in your community?

Platt (33x):	very high (9%)	high (36%)	neutral (43%)	low (12%)	very low (0%)
German (32x)	:very high (22%)	high (44%)	neutral (34%)	low (0%)	very low (0%)

39) Do you hear Platt in "mixed society", i.e. in situations where some people know Platt and other people who do not know Platt? (30x)

a) always (0%)
b) often (47%)
c) sometimes (43%)
f) seldom (10%)
e) never (0%)

40) It annoys or it would annoy me to hear Platt in "mixed society". (35x)

a) agree strongly (0%)
b) agree (6%)
c) don't know (11%)
d) disagree (46%)
e) disagree strongly (37%)

41) Which statement is true if your answer for question 40 was "agree strongly" or "agree"? (3x)

a) I do not understand everything (0%)
b) It is interruptive (100%)
c) Platt speakers should speak High German in "mixed society" (0%)
d) Platt and German do not fit into the same conversation (0%)

42) Do you think that Platt will still be spoken in fifty years from now? (22x)

a) very likely (23%)
b) likely (45%)
c) don't know (27%)
d) rather unlikely (5%)
e) highly unlikely (0%)

41) Do you think that Platt will still be spoken in a hundred years from now? (35x)

a) very likely (11%)
b) likely (19%)
c) don't know (22%)
d) rather unlikely (28%)
e) highly unlikely (20%)

42) Why do you think is Platt being spoken less and less? (35x)

a) Platt is not old fashioned/not contemporary anymore (3%)
b) the Low German language is not being passed on anymore (75%)
c) Platt is an obstacle in the professional world (5%)
d) Platt speakers have a more difficult time in school (17%)

45) Please indicate to which degree you associate the following terms with High German.

	very much	much	somewhat	a little	not at all
Heimat (home) (26x)	35%	32%	8%	8%	19%
official (25x)	56%	40%	0%	4%	0%
familiar (26x)	62%	34%	4%	0%	0%
friendly (24x)	29%	29%	38%	0%	4%
Past (21x)	38%	19%	5%	14%	24%
strange (20x)	5%	0%	5%	0%	90%
religion (23x)	26%	30%	9%	13%	22%
arrogant (22x)	0%	5%	9%	13%	73%
rural (24x)	0%	7%	21%	4%	58%
future (24x)	46%	33%	8%	0%	13%
identity (25x)	48%	32%	20%	0%	0%
City (26x)	50%	31%	19%	0%	0%

46) Which statement would apply to you personally the most? (34x)

a) Platt is a very important for me (3%)
b) Platt is important for me (12%)
c) Platt is somewhat important for me (35%)
d) Platt is unimportant for me (50%)

47) Which statement would apply to you personally the most? (34x)

a) Platt is a very important for me (71%)
b) Platt is important for me (26%)
c) Platt is somewhat important for me (3%)
d) Platt is unimportant for me (0%)

48) I am proud to be a High German speaker. (31x)

a) agree strongly (13%)
b) agree (39%)
c) don't know (16%)
d) disagree (19%)
e) disagree strongly (13%)

49) A world without Platt would be….

	agree strongly	agree	don't know	disagree	disagree strongly
sad (29x)	14%	34%	21%	21%	10%
possible (32x)	6%	56%	19%	13%	6%
richer (29x)	0%	10%	3%	32%	55%
more progressive (27x)	0%	0%	11%	48%	41%
unimaginable (30x)	3%	24%	20%	33%	20%
poorer (29x)	21%	59%	10%	0%	10%
more backward(28x)	0%	11%	18%	39%	32%
positive (30x)	0%	3%	0%	40%	57%
more practical (29x)	0%	0%	24%	45%	31%
lonelier (29x)	7%	21%	7%	41%	24%

50) It sounds beautiful when people mix Platt and German. (34x)

a) agree strongly (0%)
b) agree (21%)
c) don't know (41%)
d) disagree (32%)
e) disagree strongly (6%)

51) It annoys me when people mix Platt and German. (34x)

a) agree strongly (6%)
b) agree (18%)
c) don't know (35%)
d) disagree (29%)
e) disagree strongly (12%)

52) I think that the mixing of Platt and German leads to imperfect High German. (33x)

a) agree strongly (15%)
b) agree (40%)
c) don't know (18%)
d) disagree (15%)
e) disagree strongly (12%)

53) The mixing of Platt and German is good for the general dialogue in the Grafschaft Bentheim.(34x)

a) agree strongly (6%)
b) agree (29%)
c) don't know (33%)
d) disagree (26%)
e) disagree strongly (6%)

54) Do you sometimes use Low German expressions? (35x)

a) often (()%)
b) sometimes (57%)
c) seldom (23)
d) never (20%)

55) Which statement is true if your answer for question 55 was "sometimes" or "often"? (16x)

a) because I can express myself better by doing so (13%)
b) to show that I live in the Grafschaft Bentheim (50%)
c) because I am just able to do it (25%)
d) to emphasize my words (12%)

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS (TRANSLATION)
(Numbers in parentheses indicate the quantity of answers)
573 Informants

Age: _____

School: _____

Place of birth:_____

Residence: _____

Sex: _____

Denomination: _____

1) Can you speak or understand Platt? (548x)

a) speak and understand well (13%)
b) speak a little and understand well (40%)
c) only understand/speak none (13%)
d) understand a little/speak none (26%)
e) neither speak nor understand (8%)

2) Is Platt spoken at your home? (563x)

a) often (35%)
b) sometimes (24%)
c) seldom (13%)
d) never (28%)

3) Who speaks Platt at your home?

	always	often	sometimes	seldom	Never
father (544x)	14%	28%	21%	9%	28%
mother (555x)	12%	29%	19%	10%	30%
grandmother(509x)	33%	32%	11%	4%	20%
grandfather (565x)	32%	26%	7%	5%	20%
brother (431x)	4%	6%	11%	13%	66%
Sister (433x)	2%	3%	6%	12%	77%

4) Who speaks High German at home?

	always	Often	sometimes	seldom	Never
father (558x)	41%	28%	17%	8%	6%
mother (575x)	43%	30%	15%	7%	5%
grandmother (519x)	25%	21%	22%	19%	13%
grandfather (470x)	26%	21%	19%	19%	15%
brother (439x)	72%	15%	5%	3%	5%
Sister (439x)	78%	12%	3%	2%	5%

5) How important is Platt for you personally? (573x)

a) very important (4%)
b) important (15%)
c) don't know (35%)
d) rather unimportant (26%)
e) completely unimportant (20%)

6) Platt is as expressive as High German. (552x)

a) agree strongly (10%)
b) agree (30%)
c) don't know (46%)
d) disagree (10%)
e) disagree strongly (4%)

7) German sounds more polite and more beautiful than Platt (568x)

a) agree strongly (18%)
b) agree (41%)
c) don't know (26%)
d) disagree (12%)
e) disagree strongly (3%)

8) To which degree do you associate the following terms with Platt?

	very much	much	somewhat	a little	not at all
Heimat (home) (542x)	39%	32%	12%	7%	11%
familiar (526x)	7%	26%	27%	17%	25%
strange (516x)	4%	8%	19%	22%	47%
Past (516x)	28%	24%	16%	15%	17%
backward (508x)	10%	7%	17%	22%	44%
friendly (524x)	8%	25%	27%	18%	22%
modern (516x)	1%	1%	11%	19%	68%

9) I would enroll if Platt were offered in school as an elective. (560x)

a) yes (13%)
b) maybe (27%)
c) don't know (21%)
d) no (39%)

10) A world without Platt would be…

	agree strongly	agree	don't know	disagree	Disagree strongly
sad (530x)	6%	12%	35%	24%	23%
possible (546x)	15%	48%	22%	11%	4%
better (530x)	4%	6%	34%	33%	25%
lonelier (532x)	4%	13%	35%	22%	26%
unimaginable (525x)	4%	12%	28%	22%	34%
More practical (542x)	8%	10%	37%	23%	22%

11) Would you like to be able to speak Platt? (522x)

a) yes (41%)
b) maybe (27%)
c) don't know (14%)
d) no (18%)

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - PLATT SPEAKERS
(Oral Part - Translation)

If a question is not applicable or makes you feel uncomfortable we will simply skip to the next question. Thank you!

1) This is _____ (person's name), and the date is _____ .

2) How old are you?

3a) Where were you born?
3b) Did you also grow up there?

4) How about your parents? Where do they come from?

5) Did your parents speak Platt with you when you grew up?

6) Do you have siblings? Do they also speak Platt?

7) Did you speak more Platt or High German when you grew up?

8) How was that in school? Did the students speak Platt among each other? Did the teachers also speak Platt sometimes? Which school was that?

9) Was it a big change at first to adapt to Standard German in school?

10) With whom do you speak Platt today?

11) Do you speak Platt with your children? Why or why not?

12) In which situations do you usually speak Platt?

13) Are there situations where you avoid speaking Platt?

14a) Do you speak more or less Platt than when you grew up?
14b) If less, what do you think are the reasons for this?

15a) Do the people in your community speak more or less Platt than before?
15b) If less, what do you think are the reasons for this?

16) Do you sometimes switch to Platt when you speak High German? If yes, in which situations does this happen?

17) Are there old words in Platt that one does not use anymore? That were "germanized"?

18) Do you have friends or acquaintances with whom you speak High German although they are able so speak Platt?

19) What about the Netherlands? Do you have friends or acquaintances there? Which language do you use with them?

20) And how about Ostfriesland? Do you understand East Frisian Platt?

21) How important is Platt for you personally?

22) What do you think, how much longer will people here speak Platt? What could one do to promote Platt more?

23) Can you tell me a joke or a funny anecdote in Platt?

24) Is Platt for you a dialect or a language?

25) Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL – NON-PLATT SPEAKERS
(Oral Part - Translation)

If a question is not applicable or makes you feel uncomfortable we will simply skip to the next question. Thank you!

1 This is _____ (person's name), and the date is _____ .

2 How old are you?

3a) Where were you born?
3b) Did you also grow up there?

4) How about your parents? Where do they come from?

5) When did you come to _____ (place)?

6a) Did your parents speak High German with you when you grew up?
6b) Do you have family members who speak Platt?

7) Do you have siblings? Do they speak mainly High German, too?

8a) How old were you when you first heard Platt? What was your impression?
8b) Did you understand everything? Do you understand everything now?

9) Do you feel or have you felt like an outsider because you don't speak Platt?

10) Do you speak a little Platt? Or have you tried to learn it? If yes, with whom do you speak Platt?

11) How often do you hear Platt in your daily life? Where do you hear it?

12) Do you have children? Do your children speak or understand Platt?

13) Do your neighbors, colleagues or friends speak Platt?

14) What do you do if someone speaks Platt to you?

15) Are there certain words or expressions in Platt that you have incorporated into your lexicon?

16) Are there situations where you consciously avoid Platt?

17) What do you think, do the people here in _____ (place name) speak more or less Platt than before? If less, what do you think are the reasons for this?

18) What about the Netherlands? Are you sometimes there? Which language do you use there?

19) And Ostfriesland? Do you understand East Frisian Platt?

20) How important is Platt for you personally?

21) Do you like Platt? Do you think it is good that many people in the Grafschaft Bentheim speak Platt?

22) What do you think, how much longer will the people here speak Platt? Should one do anything to preserve Platt?

23) Is Platt for you a language or a dialect?

24) Is there anything else you would like to add?

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Vita

Heiko Wiggers was born in Radevormwald, Germany on July 11, 1968, the son of Johannes Wiggers and Inga Jablonsky. After completing High School in Germany in 1987, he entered an apprenticeship as a commercial translator in Osnabrück Germany, and was employed after that as a foreign language teacher for English, German, and Spanish at a private language school in Osnabrück, Germany. He relocated to the United States in 1992, and received his Bachelor of Arts (Major: Education and German, Minor: French) from Eastern Washington Univeristy in 1998. He entered the Department of Germanics at the University of Washington, Seattle as a graduate student and teaching assistant and received his Master of Arts in German in 2000. In September 2000 he entered the German Department at the University of Texas at Austin as a doctorate student and teaching assistant for German and Dutch. In August 2005 he relocated to Winston-Salem, North Carolina to start a position as a Lecturer in German at Wake Forest University.

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